

VIEWPOINTS

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Shorelines
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TREE PLANTING

If you could do only one thing to help protect your watershed this year, we hope you would plant a tree (or a hectare full of trees if you have the space). Plant a new one for every family member's birthday this year; plant two for every tree you cut down; plant trees to celebrate special events and family reunions. Every new native tree planted brings environmental and economic benefits.

Trees of course shade, screen and beautify property. Even on small properties, trees can provide protection from the wind, act as a natural snow fence in open areas, and provide natural air conditioning in summer. A house surrounded by trees can be six degrees cooler than one with no trees. Trees are habitat for birds and wildlife, no question. Logs and firewood will come in time. Trees enhance soil quality by adding organic matter in the form of twigs, leaves and rotting branches and stumps.

But all of that pales in comparison to the real reasons for planting trees. Trees are good for people! By holding soil in place along river banks, they also help keep the Rideau and its tributaries clean and sediment free. They improve air quality big time by capturing

carbon dioxide (the major greenhouse gas) and releasing life-giving oxygen into the atmosphere.

Canadians produce about 535 million tones of carbon dioxide annually. One hectare of trees will take up an estimated 4,000 kg of carbon dioxide per year. By planting several trees per year per family member, the average Rideau Valley family can help offset its



carbon dioxide emissions and approach carbon neutrality. Each new young native seedling planted is a miniature environmental cleaning station that will go on working tirelessly for the next 80 years.

Above all, it appears that tree planting is one of the most satisfying ways to make a personal

contribution to the environment. Most landowners will tell you it really does feel good to leave a legacy of healthy land, water and air for the next generation. Want to get involved? Call the LandOwner Resource Centre at 692-2390 or 1-800-387-5304 for information on incentive grants available to help you start planting. Every new tree is a stem in the right direction.