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Environmental  
Stewardship  
Pickering



## ESP Summer 2012 e-newsletter

Environmental Stewardship Pickering has had a busy year! We are coming to the end, however, we still have quite a few exciting events. To keep up-to-date, please "like" us on facebook and join the conversation!

[ESP Facebook Page](#)

## Mark Your Calendars for the ESP Environmental Leadership Forum

By Mary Williams

ESP's annual Environmental Leadership Forum is changing seasons this year. We are moving from March to September to help



accommodate some outdoor sessions and activities. So mark your calendars for **September 29th, 2012!**

This year's forum has an impressive line-up, starting with Cam Collyer, Director of Learning Grounds, Evergreen, conducting the keynote address. His talk will focus on creating outdoor spaces that promote creativity and learning. He uses examples of inspiring spaces he has visited around the world. You can't help but be motivated to create your own innovative outdoor space after hearing his presentation.

After the keynote there is the option to remain at the Pickering Civic Complex to take part in two indoor breakout sessions, or to get on a bus and explore Pickering.

The first bus trip will be to the Pickering Museum Village. At the museum, volunteers from the Bloomers and Britches gardening group will lead us down the museum garden paths to teach us about historical gardens and plant identification. We will then take part in a presentation from the Monarch Teachers Network and learn hands on about the lifecycle of monarch butterflies and how to use them as a learning tool.

The second bus trip will travel to two locations. First we will visit the new arboretum at Finch Ave. and Rosebank Rd. Toronto and Region Conservation staff will lead participants through the arboretum, providing helpful tips and tricks to identify the native trees found in the arboretum and around

Gorgeous Gardens - Fall  
Edition

Date: September 12, 2012

Location: Pickering Civic  
Complex

Time: 7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.

Perennial favourite Ken Brown, suburban garden guru, presents how-to's for Putting Your Garden to Bed, and tips on creating an award winning garden. Take a visual tour of Pickering Blooms 2012 winning gardens.

Registration is required, please phone the Customer Care Centre 905.683.7575 TTY 905.420.1739

For more information, please visit the [City of Pickering events calendar](#).

## Clean up Lake Ontario

Date: Saturday, September 15

Location: Rotary Frenchman's  
Bay West Park

Time: 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Over 56,000 Canadians are ready to clean up our shorelines. Are you one of them? Participate in the Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup, one of the largest clean ups in the world. Help us get rid of thousands of cigarette butts, plastic bags, bottles, cans, and food wrappers that end up on our shorelines and in our waterways.

We will bring the gloves, bags, water and snacks. All you have

Pickering. Next, we will travel to Alex Robertson Park to take part in a workshop on how to lead an interpretive hike.

If bus tours are not your thing, stay at the Pickering Civic Complex and learn about species at risk. First up we will have Dr. Lawrence Packer introduce you to some species at risk. The second session we will have an expert talk about one of our most interesting nocturnal creatures - bats.

We are looking forward to our September forum this year and hope you find the new format as interesting and exciting as we do. We think it will provide a more hands-on, experiential opportunity for participants and are looking forward to getting outside and experiencing some of the great parks and facilities that Pickering has to offer. We hope you to see you there!

All of the information can be found in the event sidebar of this e-newsletter or online at the [TRCA event registration website](#).

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## Emerald Ash Borer

Photo Credit: David Cappert, Michigan State University

The Emerald Ash Borer (EAB), an invasive insect that attacks and kills only ash trees, has recently been detected in west Pickering.



While the City is taking steps to deal with the situation on municipal property, it warns that large ash trees on private property are also at risk. To mitigate the infestation, all Pickering homeowners who have ash trees are advised to look for signs of infestation such as "D" shaped exit holes on the tree trunk; signs of woodpecker damage; and/or thinning near the top or 'crown' of the tree.

If EAB is detected early enough, or if the ash tree appears healthy, the tree may be treated with TreeAzin (a naturally occurring bio insecticide), which has shown to be effective in controlling EAB and keeping ash trees alive and healthy. If a tree is heavily infested (more than a third of the crown has died off), the City recommends removal for safety reasons and to prevent the continued EAB spread.

Residents with a heavily infected ash tree should contact a certified arborist for proper removal. Trees that are taken down can be burned in home woodstoves and fireplaces, but cannot be taken as firewood to a cottage or campground outside of a federally regulated area. Those found illegally transporting firewood or ash wood materials may be subject to a federal fine or prosecution.

to do is register and show up. Rain or shine, dress for the weather.

To register, visit the [Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup website](#) and help us clean up a section of Pickering's waterfront.

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## Environmental Leadership Forum

Date: Saturday, September 29

Location: Pickering Civic Complex

Time: 8:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Are you interested in environmental stewardship activities? Whether you are just starting out or have been active for years, there is something for you at the 2012 Environmental Leadership Forum. Join us for a Free day of workshops, outdoor training sessions and networking.

To register for to the [TRCA event registration website](#).

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## Take Pride in Pickering

Date: Saturday, October 13

Location: Alex Robertson Park

Time: 10:00 a.m.

Join Environmental Stewardship Pickering and Ontario Power Generation for a fun day of planting native trees and shrubs to extend the natural habitat for birds and mammals. A barbecue lunch will follow at Alex Robertson park. Bring shovels and gloves if you have them. Students...earn community service hours for this activity.

For more information please visit the [TRCA Stewardship Event website](#).

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For more information visit the [City of Pickering website](#) or contact the Customer Care Centre at 905.683.7575 or TTY. 905.420.1739.

Photo from:

<http://inspection.gc.ca/plants/plant-protection/insects/emerald-ash-borer/eng/1337273882117/1337273975030>

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## Getting to know your nocturnal neighbours

By Margo Sloan  
Photo credit: Chris Ketola

Bats are fascinating creatures! Yet they continually face persecution due to the numerous myths and mysteries surrounding them. And as a result, now, more than ever, bats are at risk.



For generations bats have been unnecessarily feared by humans. Myths and fears surrounding bats have led to their eviction from urban dwellings. Many people fear that bats have rabies. It's true that bats, like most mammals, can carry rabies. However, only a small fraction of the population is likely infected. However, it's always better to be safe than sorry. If you have been bitten by ANY wild mammal, you should seek medical attention immediately. This doesn't mean that all bats found in or near your home are rabid. Bats may find that the spaces in your attic or eaves make great summer roosting sites because spaces they normally use, such as trees with cavities or old barns, have been removed. Also, bats found in your house during the late winter may have been disturbed during hibernation, and will be desperately seeking water to avoid dehydration. It may seem unusual to find these bats in a sink or bath tub, but they aren't sick, they're thirsty.

Another common myth about bats is that they will fly into your hair. This is completely false. Bats are incredible hunters. Using echolocation, bats are capable of locating objects smaller than a human hair. They are also capable of capturing insects at speeds of 30km per hour... while flying... in the dark. In short, bats are simply too good at what they do to get tangled in your hair. Ontario has eight native bat species and all of them are insectivores. They capture insects in the membrane of their tails as they fly through the air. In fact, bats are useful in helping to control insect populations. A single Little Brown Bat can eat its weight in

insects in one evening; that's approximately 600 pests a night!

In February 2012, an emergency assessment subcommittee of COSEWIC (Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada) assessed the status of three native bat species in Canada as Endangered. The committee recommended that an Emergency Order be issued to put Tricolored Bat, Little Brown Bat, and Northern Bat on the Species at Risk List. This is only the fourth time in the last decade that the process to fast track a species to the endangered species list has been implemented. So why the big rush?

White-nose Syndrome (WNS). In 2006, WNS was discovered in North American bat populations in New York State. In 2009, it was confirmed in Canada. This disease is caused by a fungus found on the nose, ears and wings of infected bats. Though little is known about the syndrome, the fungus is thought to be responsible for disrupting bats in hibernation, causing the bats to wake up early when no food is available. The energy cost of waking up from hibernation is high. It takes as much energy to awake from hibernation as it does to remain in hibernation for up to 60 days. If bats awake early and are forced back into hibernation due to a lack of food, they may not have enough energy stored in their remaining body fat to make it through to the spring. As a result, millions of bats have been lost to this disease.

Educating the community about bats may help us debunk the monster-like myths endangering these creatures, and help us to appreciate them for the role they play in the ecosystem. Monitoring bat populations and maintaining disease free roosting sites for bats is also vital for their survival. For more information about bats, please join us for our 4th Annual Environmental Leadership Forum on Saturday September 29th, 2012.

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## Discovering Pickering's Urban Forest

A healthy urban forest provides many benefits including improved air quality, moderation of climate, erosion control, and various recreational, health and social benefits. These benefits increase as trees grow larger, so it is important to care for our trees from day one.



### **The Results Are In**

The City of Pickering, in association with Toronto and Region Conservation (TRCA), has completed an Urban Forest Study. The purpose of the study is to gain an

understanding of the health and number of trees and shrubs that grow on public and private property within Pickering.

As part of the study, a tree inventory was taken of Pickering's urban area. In total, 99 tree species were recorded. However, the 10 most common species account for 71 percent of all the trees in Pickering. An aerial tree cover assessment determined that the total tree and shrub canopy cover in urban Pickering is approximately 26 percent. View the full Urban Forest Study at [pickering.ca](http://pickering.ca)

### **Moving Forward**

The information collected in the study will now be used to prepare an Urban Forest Management Plan. The Plan will provide direction for the development of more stringent tree protection policies and techniques to maintain and enhance our urban forest.

The creation of a management plan is important. For example, White Ash trees represent 10 percent of all trees within Pickering. With the infestation of the Emerald Ash Borer, many of these trees will be lost. The management plan will allow staff to plant a more diverse number of tree species, ensuring Pickering's urban forest is more resilient to pests, disease and climate change in the future.

Partnerships between the City, TRCA, developers and private land owners will be essential to ensure the creation of a diverse urban forest in Pickering for years to come.

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