



Lakeshore Eco-Network

# Make the Planet Great Again!

News from Lakeshore Eco-Network

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## Upcoming Events—Spread the Word!

**April 17, 10:30 a.m. to noon- Climate Café, Grand Bend Place, 25 Main Street, Grand Bend**

**May 4, 9 a.m. to 12 p.m.—Spring Native Tree and Plant Sale, Lambton Heritage Museum, Grand Bend**

**May 15, 10:30 to noon – Climate Café, Grand Bend Place, 25 Main Street, Grand Bend**

Lakeshore Eco-Network

One free tree for the first 30 shoppers!

### Spring Native Tree and Plant Sale

Saturday May 4, 9 a.m. to noon  
Lambton Heritage Museum, Grand Bend

- Beautiful, easy to grow native trees and plants
- Children's enviro activities
- Bake sale in support of Grand Bend Food Bank

What will climate change mean for our region?

## BE PART OF THE CONVERSATION!

Will climate change bring warmer winters and longer growing seasons? More severe storms, drought, scorching summer heat? Let's talk about what the future holds and what we can do. Bring your ideas and your passion!

**Wednesday, April 17, 10:30 to noon**  
**Grand Bend Place, 25 Main Street**  
Coffee and snacks on us!

Presented by Lakeshore Eco-Network with support from the Rotary Club of Grand Bend

## Climate Cafes Begin!



March 20 was a cold, blustery day, but the atmosphere inside the Dunes Refillery in Northville was cozy, even hot! It was the site of the first-ever Grand Bend Climate Café.

Climate Cafes are springing up around the world. A Climate Café® is a welcoming, inclusive, informal space to get together to chat and act on climate change. It's a place to share concerns and anxieties, and also to talk about solutions.

LEN has planned seven Cafes over the next ten months, each one with a different theme. The first one was focused on reducing our use of plastics, and appropriately, it took place at the Dunes Refillery, an innovative shop where customers can buy many items in bulk, using their own containers.

The morning started with a welcome from Lynn Tremain, who is famous for her beach garbage picking, and in particular, her passion for (well, against really!) helium balloons. Tremain heard about Climate Cafes on CBC radio, and brought the idea to LEN, where she is a board member. Refillery owner Raquel Murray shared a little of her story and the inspiration for her business.

With the formal bit over, the 30-plus participants dived in, and before long, the room was humming with lively conversation. Plastic reducing household tips were shared, and beefs about excess packaging, for-profit recycling, and much more were discussed. The mood was positive and energetic, an antidote to the anxiety that is sometimes inspired by this topic.

"Our first Café was awesome," says Pat Morden, chair of LEN's Climate Change Committee. "I had the sense that people really needed to talk about this stuff. Complete strangers sat down together and discovered that they shared the same concerns. I can't wait to do this again!"

*Special thanks to Lynn Tremain for suggesting the Climate Café idea, and to Raquel Murray for opening her wonderful Dunes Refillery as the setting for our first event. The next Climate Café will take place on April 17 at Grand Bend Place, 25 Main Street in Grand Bend, and will focus on how climate change will affect our communities. Please join us!*

## Filtering Out Microfiber Pollution

Brian Hall, one of the participants in our first Climate Café, raised the question of microfiber pollution, and the use of washing machine filters to mitigate it.

Microfibers are small fibers composed of synthetic or natural materials, created through the normal wear and tear of fabrics. Synthetic fibers are a form of microplastic pollution. Studies have found that a single load of laundry can release thousands of microfibers into the washing machine waste water. Some pass through wastewater treatment, and are released into streams, rivers and lakes. Microfibers have been found in surface water, soil, commercial fish, honey, and salt.

The Halls have been using a special external filter ever since they built their house 15 years ago. Says Brian, “I believe it has done an excellent job of removing microfibers from the laundry wastewater before it reaches the septic tank.” The experts agree. [According to a study done at the University of Toronto](#), the filters prevented 87% of fibers by count and 80% by weight from entering waste water streams.

While the filters are currently an “add-on” separate from washing machines, there is a move afoot to mandate microfiber filters in all new washing machines.

For more, [click here](#).

## Oak Wilt: What you need to know



This devastating and highly infectious disease affects all sub-species of oak and results in tree death, often in months. Given that much of our beautiful tree canopy is made up of majestic oak trees, this is cause for special concern in Lambton Shores. Oak Wilt has already been detected in three locations in southern Ontario.

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA), the federal body tasked with managing the Oak Wilt threat, urges the following preventive measures.

- Don't prune oak trees between April and November
- [Don't move firewood](#)
- Report suspected signs to the CFIA
- Check oak trees for signs of oak wilt

Friends of Pinery Park hosted a public information event in March. Click here to see a recording:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x8tIXxvkc20>

## All trees are not created equal

By James Corcoran

Not all trees are created equal. This week we will be starting sugar maple seedlings in our greenhouse using seeds collected last fall from an extraordinary tree in the village of Grand Bend, estimated to be 200 years old.



Figure 1: My 50 cm calipers shown here on the ground are too small for this more than 80 cm diameter trees

This tree was 40 years old when Canada was formed as a country. In 1876, the year the Ausable River "cut" was completed it was 50 years old. And in 1892 when the final cut was made, to make a harbour at Grand Bend, and in the process, isolating the "old" Ausable Channel, this tree was 70 years old. It was part of the original forest and one in a million in that of the millions of seeds that fall to the forest floor, less than one will survive to be a mature tree.

Up until today this tree has been preserved, together with three of its equally impressive companions, Oak trees, in a rare public space in the village of Grand Bend, part of the commons known as Eilber Street Parkette. All four trees will be destroyed if Lambton Shores council has its way to sell the land to a speculator for a private parking lot. No public consultation took place in what appears to be a 'behind the scenes' deal.

A land survey describing the public lands Council intends to turn over to the speculator has been completed and now all that remains for council to proceed with the sale is to post public notices declaring the plot of land with the trees "surplus". Thankfully this process will require Council to finally respond to public inquiries. If this all seems backwards to you, that there should have been a public discussion and consultation before directing a

survey to carve up Eilber Parkette, you would be right. Moreover, staff had recommended that a narrower strip of land be sold to the private entity which would meet their needs, and at the same time preserve the trees.

This is where I segue from the four trees in Eilber Parkette, to tree protection in general, which is lacking in Grand Bend, though in Ontario and throughout the world, municipalities are putting common sense regulations in place to prevent, or at least pause and reflect on the necessity of, some tree removals.

Trees are a big part of Grand Bend's story situated as it is in one of the largest remaining forested regions in southern Ontario. Anyone who has been paying attention in the past decade can see that we have been losing our tree cover at an alarming pace. Other municipalities have set targets for tree canopy cover of 50%. Without any target and no tree protection regulations to support a tree canopy target, we are headed for less than 10% tree cover, our living spaces and tourist areas dominated by concrete. Disingenuous planners representing developers offer tree plantings to compensate for the removal of large venerable trees. As a professional planner, I saw this fantasy sold almost daily. The fact is, a thousand newly planted trees cannot compensate for the loss of habitat, loss of atmospheric cooling and loss of carbon sequestration provided by a single large, indigenous tree, the one in a million that has persevered through all manner of environmental assaults, to live beyond a century. These venerable trees need to be preserved for the resiliency of their genetics alone.

## Sorting out the Carbon Tax Debate

One party sees it as dictatorial; another says it's our salvation. "Axe the Tax" and "Spike the Hike" have a nice ring, and no-one's been able to come up with a good rhyme in its defense. If you're confused about this issue, join the club!

First, a few basic facts:

- Carbon dioxide is a greenhouse gas produced by burning fossil fuels like oil and gas. It contributes significantly to the warming of our planet.
- Carbon pricing, of which the Canadian carbon tax is one example, is the practice of placing a fee on emitting carbon or offering an incentive for emitting less. Because money talks, this practice is designed to change the way we consume and invest, reducing the amount of carbon released into the atmosphere.
- Many economists, including Nobel laureate William Nordhaus who was recognized for his work in this area, believe that carbon pricing is the most effective way to reduce carbon pollution.
- **Seventy national and subnational governments around the world have introduced a price on carbon pollution.**
- Since 2019, every jurisdiction in Canada has had a price on carbon pollution. Each one can design its own pricing system or choose the federal pricing system. The federal government sets minimum national standards.
- **90% of the carbon tax proceeds from fuel are used to support the Canadian Carbon rebates.** All adult Canadians who file an income tax return receive the Rebate automatically.
- **Eight out of 10 Canadians receive more in the rebate than they pay in the tax (although polls show that many are unaware of receiving the rebate)**
- Gasoline and diesel used on farms are not subject to the tax.
- Most provinces and territories have a pricing system for industry that meets federal standards.
- **It works! Research shows that since it was introduced in 2008, B.C.'s carbon tax has decreased carbon emissions.**

Now here's where it gets complicated. In 2023, the Parliamentary Budget Office (PBO) released a much-quoted analysis of the impact of the carbon tax on Canadian households. The report agreed that most Canadians get more back than they spend on the tax, and that the tax is moderately progressive (i.e. the largest impact is on higher income households).

But the report went on to look at the impact of the tax on the economy more broadly and concluded that there would be a net cost to Canadians by 2030. (Again the impact is progressive: the lowest income 20% will



be in a net positive position; and the highest income Canadians will bear most of the burden – up to \$8,871 in Alberta).

But the PBO didn't compare the cost of the carbon tax to another plan to reduce carbon emissions: the comparison was to doing nothing. (Some Canadian politicians have suggested that they'll deal with the climate crisis through yet-to-be-discovered technological innovation. And BTW, the Easter Bunny came by on the weekend.)

Meanwhile the economic impact of the climate crisis is affecting many Canadians. The Canadian Climate Institute estimates that climate change and the extreme weather events it brings now cost about \$720 per person annually, and will rise to \$1,900 to \$2,300 per person by 2050. And there are likely economic benefits for Canada participating in a global green economy.

The debate may dominate the next federal election campaign. At least we're talking about the climate crisis, and Canadians will have an opportunity to decide if they want to be part of the solution.

### Container Gardening with Native Plants



Imagine your pots and urns filled with a colorful array of beautiful flowers and plants, blooming in sequence throughout the summer, and requiring minimal maintenance. Then imagine the same gorgeous display coming up every year! That's the joy of using native plants in your containers, instead of exotic annuals.

"Think of containers as miniature gardens," says Janet Kurasz, LEN board member and environmental horticulturist. "In a sense they're miniature ecosystems too. Native plants support pollinators and attract birds to your garden. And because they're perennials, there's no need to buy new plants each year as you would with annuals."

Here's what Janet recommends:

- Choose large containers.
- Use potting soil with coconut coir (not peat moss). She uses a light topsoil mixed with her own screened compost, which has a light texture.
- Research the plants and select plants that would normally be found growing in similar conditions.
- Avoid plants with deep taproots.
- If unwanted seedlings appear, just remove them.
- Flush the soil every few years to avoid mineral buildup.

- Store in an unheated garage or shed or outside away from strong winds. Wrap containers with insulating material or surround with straw bales or bags of leaves. (Leaves can be tossed in the composter and the bags can be re-used the following year.)
- In the spring (but not too soon because insects might be overwintering in your container), clear away the dead debris.
- You can add a bit of organic fertilizer to the container soil, gently scratching it into the top two or three inches of soil
- If your plants grow too tall, in the early summer trim back the top one-third of the plant to stunt its height and create a bushier plant.

Among the plants Janet suggests for a full to part sun setting

Common Boneset

Coneflower

Wild Geranium

Butterfly Weed

Wild Strawberry

Coreopsis

Common Yarrow

Black-eye Susan

Zig-zag Goldenrod

Beebalm



For part to full shade, try:

Large-leaved Aster

White Wood Aster

Bloodroot

American Speedwell

Bunchberry

Canada Mayflower

Canada Anemone

Canadian Wild Ginger

Northern Goldenrod

Foamflower

False Solomon's Seal



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