

## City's annual Tree Giveaway and Rain Barrel Sale shifts online

**Oct. 5, 2020** — St. Catharines residents may have noticed two spring traditions were absent this year; the City's annual Tree Giveaway and Rain Barrel Sale. However, despite delays due to COVID-19, both will go ahead this fall with online ordering and curbside pick up.

“This is one of our most popular annual events,” said Manager of Environmental Services Mark Green. “Regardless of the restrictions COVID-19 has put on us, we wanted to find a way to support our residents in their own environmental sustainability efforts.”

The Fall Tree Giveaway and Rain Barrel event will be held Saturday, Oct. 17 for pick up only. All rain barrels must be pre-purchased and trees pre-selected online. Unlike previous years, residents will not be able to pick out a tree or purchase a barrel on Oct. 17 without pre-ordering online.

“The City’s goal is to have a tree canopy of 30 per cent by 2030,” said Development Horticultural Technician Ilyse Norton. “In order to achieve this, we need to not only plant about 1,000 trees per year on City property, but also encourage residents to plant 1,000 trees each year on private properties throughout St. Catharines.

“A healthy tree canopy reduces stormwater runoff, cleans the air, provides shade, and decrease heating and cooling costs,” she added.

There will be four types of trees residents can pre-select online on a first-come, first-served basis: blackgum (*nyssa sylvatica*), sugar maple (*acer saccharum*), Princeton elm (*ulmus americana* 'Princeton') and nannyberry (*viburnum lentago*).

To receive a free tree, residents must agree to plant and maintain the tree on private property located in St. Catharines, ideally in their own yards. Trees cannot be planted on boulevards, along streets or in City parks. Proof of St. Catharines residency is required, such as a driver's licence, and each property address is limited to one tree.

The City also subsidizes the cost of rain barrels for residents during their annual Rain Barrel Sale, by offering them for \$40 each at a maximum of two barrels per household.

Rain barrels help protect the environment by keeping rainwater out of the sewers thereby reducing water pollution. They also reduce the amount of bacteria, oils, grease and other pollutants getting into local waterways and reduce peak water demand. Rain barrels benefit residents by helping them save on water

bills and, since rainwater doesn't contain minerals, chlorine and other chemicals, it helps plants to thrive.

Residents can order their free tree and purchase rain barrels at [www.engagestc.ca](http://www.engagestc.ca). All trees and rain barrels must be picked up on Oct. 17 in the Seymour Hannah Sports and Entertainment Complex parking lot. Once residents have ordered their tree online, they will be given a timeslot between 8:30 a.m. and 1 p.m. to pick it up.

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