



NEWS RELEASE - FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Trees Ontario Green Leader creates a Healthy Backyard Oasis

CEDAR SPRINGS, ON – Theo Van Asten, a retired broiler chicken farmer, has been named as a Trees Ontario Green Leader for his dedication to tree planting.

Trees Ontario is a not-for-profit organization committed to the re-greening of Ontario through tree planting efforts on rural lands and in urban areas. The Green Leader Program recognizes landowners who have worked with our partners to take part in the Ontario government's [50 Million Tree Program](#), which will see 50 million trees planted in southern Ontario by 2020. While Trees Ontario appreciates all the landowners who take part in our programs, these individuals are local stewardship ambassadors, engaged with the environment and are supportive of our tree planting efforts.

"Theo is a very dedicated landowner who has invested a serious amount of time and money into his 22 acre site," said Randall Van Wagner, BSc, Environmental Project Coordinator at the [Lower Thames Valley Conservation Authority](#) (LTVCA), who nominated Theo for the designation.

Originally from Holland, Theo immigrated to Canada in 1970 with his family where he settled down near Rodney, ON to farm. Theo grew up taking care of lands and livestock. His affinity for trees came naturally, "Maybe I inherited it from my dad. He was always planting trees and talking about trees."

In 2008, Theo and his wife Lia moved to Cedar Springs, ON and in 2009, they bought the land behind the property. Previously, the land was used as a ballpark and a gravel pit, a stark contrast to the scene now.

"This was almost a dump," explains Theo. "I bought this property because they were talking about making it a wrecking yard. It would upset me every morning to look out the window here to see cars. I think this looks a lot better and in the long run I think it's good for the environment and for the future."

The 22 acres features a few acres of ponds, four acres of wetland and the remainder consists of approximately 10,000 trees. With the help of the LTVCA, they began planting trees in the spring of 2009 and planted an additional acre in 2010. Approximately 10 species of native trees have been planted. They also created a gentle slope behind the house and planted flowers. According to Theo's estimate, they planted approximately 60,000 bulbs.

“It’s gardening on a huge scale,” adds Randall.

“Trees Ontario would like to congratulate Theo for his tree planting efforts. His enthusiasm for trees is apparent and we are very proud to honour him with this designation,” said Rob Keen, RPF, Trees Ontario CEO. “He is a great ambassador for our program and tree planting in general.”

“We see the results everyday. In the end, I can look out and I can see my own accomplishments,” says Theo. “We are enjoying it very much and are very happy about it. It looks like paradise here.”

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About Trees Ontario

Trees Ontario is a not-for-profit organization committed to the re-greening of Ontario through tree planting efforts on rural lands and in urban areas. Since 2004, Trees Ontario and its 65 provincial partners have planted over 13 million trees across the province. Our goal is to increase this support to 10 million trees a year by 2015.

The [50 Million Tree Program](#) is a provincial government program that will see 50 million trees planted in southern Ontario by 2020. Trees Ontario is the lead delivery agent for the Ontario government's 50 Million Tree Program, which provides financial incentives to people looking to plant trees. It also provides eligible landowners with hands-on professional help and advice on tree planting including determining site eligibility, allocating funding and coordinating planting. For more information about the 50 Million Tree Program and other tree planting programs and incentives available to Ontario landowners, please [click here](#).

For more information about Theo Van Asten’s Garden Oasis, please [click here](#).

For more information, photos or to arrange an interview please contact:

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