

OFFICIAL MEDIA RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

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SEND YOUR CHRISTMAS TREE TO THE CURB AND GIVE BACK TO THE ENVIRONMENT PROJECT TREE CYCLE 2011

Niagara Falls, ON - What do you do with your Christmas tree now that Christmas and New Year's have passed? Come to the Niagara Parks Botanical Gardens and School of Horticulture on **Sunday, January 9 from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.** for the annual Project Tree Cycle event.

The Niagara Parks Commission (NPC) invites you to bring your own bag and shovel to collect **FREE wood chips** recycled from discarded Christmas trees. Christmas trees will be collected on Saturday, January 8 through the Regional Waste Program and NPC staff will mulch the trees on Sunday, January 9. The wood chip mulch will be available in the north end of the parking lot directly in front of the Niagara Parks Botanical Gardens and School of Horticulture.

Bring your whole family out for this special event! After collecting your free wood chips, come in from the cold to bask in the tropical warmth of the **Niagara Parks Butterfly Conservatory and take advantage of the special two for one admission** being offered at the attraction that day between 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. (last ticket sold at 4:30 p.m.). Admission to the Butterfly Conservatory is \$12.25 for Adults (13+) and \$7.95 for Children (6-12). These prices do not include HST). Children five and under are FREE.

Winter is truly a special time at the grounds of the Botanical Gardens. Visitors can enjoy a leisurely walk to take in the winter form of plants, discover the student designed winter displays found throughout the gardens, visit the ornamental bird collection (aviary) or watch the many different species of birds as they fly in and out of the Niagara Gorge.

The Niagara Parks Botanical Gardens, School of Horticulture and the Butterfly Conservatory are located at 2565 Niagara Parkway, Niagara Falls, Ontario. The Niagara Parks Commission is an agency of the Ontario Ministry of Tourism that has operated at no cost to taxpayers since 1885.

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Christmas tree fact sheet attached. For more information, visit www.niagaraparks.com or call:

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Christmas Tree Fun Facts and Figures

Do you know how many real Christmas trees are sold throughout North America? Here are some fun facts about Christmas trees from the National Christmas Tree Association:

- There are approximately 25-30 million real Christmas trees sold in North America every year.
- Approximately 330,000 real Christmas trees are sold via e-commerce or catalogue and shipped mail-order.
- 98% of North-American real Christmas trees are grown in all 50 states and Canada.
- Real Christmas trees are a renewable, recyclable resource and are planted for harvesting just as corn and/or pumpkins are cultivated for a harvest. Artificial trees contain non-biodegradable plastics and possible metal toxins such as lead..
- For each Real Christmas Tree harvested, up to three new seedlings are planted in its place in the spring, depending on farm size and current field rotation. Young trees in their rapid growth years have a high rate of photosynthesis and thus produce more oxygen than older trees.
- Each year, over 60 million new seedlings were planted by Christmas tree farmers all over North America.
- There are about 1 million acres in production for growing Christmas trees. Each acre provides the daily oxygen requirements of 18 people.
- There are about 15,000 Christmas tree growers in North America and over 100,000 people employed full or part-time in the industry.
- It can take as many as 15 years to grow a tree of average retail sale height (6 feet), but the average growing time is 7 years.
- The top selling Christmas trees are: balsam fir, Douglas-fir, Fraser fir, noble fir, Scotch pine, Virginia pine, and white pine.

Christmas trees are more than just the celebration of life during the holidays; they're a source of life after it. Real Christmas trees, unlike artificial ones which aren't biodegradable and will remain in landfills for centuries after their disposed of, can provide something back to the environment in a variety of ways:

- Christmas trees are biodegradable - the trunk and branches can be used as mulch for gardens, parks or in animal stalls. The mulch provides a protective barrier for the roots of other plants and vegetation while preventing weeds from growing. The mulch then decomposes, providing the nutrients plants need to thrive.
- Some communities use Christmas trees to make effective sand and soil erosion barriers, especially at beaches and on riverbeds. Sunk into private fish ponds trees make excellent refuge and feeding area for fish.
- Before recycling, Christmas trees can be used to make bird feeders, adding color and excitement to the winter garden. Utilize orange slices, suet, and seed to attract the birds. They will come for the food and stay for the shelter in the branches.