



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### Breathing new life into St. James Park

*New turfgrass will revive green space damaged by Occupy Toronto protest*

TORONTO, Dec. 7, 2011 /CNW/ - After five weeks playing host to Occupy Toronto protesters, the lawn at Toronto's St. James Park suffered severe damage, with the lawn trampled to death.

But local residents concerned about the condition of their communal gathering space can be assured it will be brought back to life. [Landscape Ontario](#) is partnering with the [Nursery Sod Growers Association of Ontario](#), [Project EverGreen](#) and the community to restore some greenery in St. James Park with a new lawn. Turfgrass is an enormous environmental benefit that is so often underestimated with its incredible ability to keep Toronto clean, green and healthy.

"There is a huge volunteer effort that will be happening here," says Tony DiGiovanni, executive director of Landscape Ontario. "There will be more than 10,000 rolls of sod and at least 23 dump trucks of soil and an incredible number of people being very charitable."

Volunteers from member Landscape Ontario and Nursery Sod-Growers Association firms will be on site Wednesday to begin preparation work, but the noticeable difference will happen Thursday as an army of volunteers lays the new sod to replace that which was damaged during the Occupy Toronto protest.

Restoring the lawn at St. James Park is an effort on par with planting a forest of trees when it comes to cleaning our air and creating the best situation for a healthy environment.

"A green and healthy lawn is just as important as a tree," says Kyle Tobin, owner of [LawnSavers Plant Health Care](#) and a manager of the St. James Park project. "We have a unique opportunity right now before winter to restore the lawn and take advantage of ideal conditions. We will get in there and it will go from brown to green immediately and flourish next spring."

A lush, green lawn is more than just pleasing to the eye. Did you know:

- That 220 square feet of turfgrass produces enough oxygen for a family of four; that means restoring the turfgrass in St. James Park will produce enough clean air for 545 families;
- North American Lawns store billions of tonnes of carbon, making turfgrass a leading contributor to offset carbon and reduce global warming;
- The average front lawn has the cooling effect of 8.5 tonnes of air conditioning; Lawns will be 18°C (30°F) cooler than asphalt and 7°C (14°F) cooler than bare soil in the heat of summer.
- Turf improves water quality by storing and filtering the water that would otherwise go into catch-basins and into the lake.
- A 10,000 square foot lawn will contain six grass plants per square inch, 850 plants per square foot and 8.5 million plants total. Think of your lawn as a forest of grass plants.

Community members interested helping out with the transformation of St. James are invited to come to the park on Thursday to support the massive volunteer effort.

"When you consider the immense environmental benefits of turf, we are going to make a huge impact with the revitalization of St. James Park," says Alan White, owner of [Turf Systems Inc.](#) and a manager of the St. James Park project. "A new lawn in the park will have the equivalent impact of producing enough clean air for 2,180 people each day. It will help maintain a healthy temperature in our environment and work to keep our air and water clean."

**Landscape Ontario Horticultural Trades Association**, one of the most vibrant associations of its kind, is comprised of more than 2,000 members, 10 sector groups and nine local chapters. Its trade mission is to promote the horticulture industry in Ontario, and its public mission, Green for Life, promotes the joys and benefits of plants and green spaces. Visit <http://www.landscapeontario.com> for more information.

Formed in 1960, the **Nursery Sod Growers Association of Ontario** (N.S.G.A.) is a non-profit organization dedicated to the betterment of the turfgrass sod industry. The main objectives of the association are to develop and maintain high standards of turfgrass sod quality, to stimulate consumer knowledge of quality turfgrass sod, to work in close co-operation with allied professions to the benefit of consumer and trade alike, and to gather, analyze and disseminate information of general interest to the public, governmental agencies and other organizations.

**Project EverGreen** is committed to informing the Canadian public about the positive effects of well-maintained green spaces, including lawns and landscapes, sports turf, golf courses and parks. We want to inspire you to get involved and get passionate about green spaces! [www.projectevergreen.ca](http://www.projectevergreen.ca)

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