

Don't Kiss your Ash Goodbye

Our Trees and lakes are suffering from low levels of Calcium in the soil, the lasting impact of decades of acid rain. The lack of calcium is slowing down the growth and harming the health of our trees when we need them most.

The Benefits of spreading your own ash = Healthier Trees that

- Grow bigger and faster
- May be able to remove more carbon from the air, having a positive impact on climate change
- Increase their transpiration – with the potential to reduce the impact of spring flooding
- Be more resistant to blowdown in wind and snow storms and to forest fires, because there is less standing dead wood

Here is what you need to know

One 750 gram yogurt-type container filled with ash will restore the calcium lost in one square metre of land. (That's the same as 4 tonnes per hectare.)

What else do I need to know to spread my own ash?

- Only use **clean ash**. Do not burn metallic foil, plastic products, pressure-treated wood, construction waste or wood that may contain chemical preservatives, insecticides, glue, nails, staples, other metals or paint.
- Allow your wood ash to cool completely – for several days before using. Hot ash is a real fire risk to homes, property and forests.
- Rake your cold ash to ensure there are no non-ash items.
- Keep your ash dry until you are ready to spread it.
- Wear a mask, gloves and long clothing when spreading ash.
- Spread it in a location that you can keep people and pets away from for a couple of days. Any forested area is good and even property surrounding your trees.
- Only apply ash to each location once. Research suggests that one application, ever, is enough to replace 50 years of calcium depletion caused by acid rain.
- Spring, summer and fall are all good times of year but avoid spreading ash over the snow, on a steep slope, or near surface water.
- No trees on your property? Offer your ash to your neighbours and friends

Fun Fact

If we could spread ash on all the forests in Eastern Canada it would have the same Climate impact as planting 1 billion new trees

Sources – this article is based on years of research by the Friends of the Muskoka Watershed (FOTMW) in cooperation with Trent University. For more info and to support FOTMW visit <https://fotmw.org/>

If you are adding ash and restoring your forest, please let FOTMW know emailing spencer@fotmw.org and let him know!

