



**January 2026 News**

- New Year Message from our Executive Director
- Spring Planting Rebate Program
  - LO Congress 2026
- Nursery Partner Spotlight: Pineneedle Farms Inc.
  - Winter Maple Care

**Happy New Year  
- Moving forward with  
Maple Leaves Forever**

by Deb Pella Keen, Executive Director



As we begin 2026, we extend a warm Happy New Year to our Maple Leaves Forever community.

We closed 2025 with the sad loss of our founder, Ken Jewett, at the age of 95. We are deeply grateful for the many kind notes, shared memories, and donations received in his honour. They are a meaningful reminder of Ken's lasting vision and the community he helped build.



*Ken and Deb at the Conservation Ontario Council Partner Day - Sept 2024*

Looking ahead, Maple Leaves Forever continues its work with renewed purpose and optimism. Our mission remains simple and strong: to promote and support the planting of locally sourced, native Canadian maple trees for future generations, with the continued support of landowners, nurseries, partners, and community leaders.

At a December 2025 tree lighting ceremony at Queen’s Park, I had the opportunity to meet Lieutenant Governor Edith Dumont and speak briefly with her about the maple leaf insignia pin she was wearing. She shared how the maple leaf represents Canada’s identity, service, and continuity, and how the insignia reflects the responsibilities of her office. It was a brief but meaningful exchange and a timely reminder of the shared symbolism behind the maple leaf—one that connects our country, our communities, and our collective stewardship.



Lieutenant Governor Edith Dumont and Deb Pella Keen



Vice-regal badge of the Lieutenant Governor

Thank you for being part of this work as we move forward with hope and confidence in the year ahead.

Deb Pella Keen  
On behalf of the MLF Team

## MLF News

### Learn about our 25% REBATE on Native Maple Trees

SPRING APPLICATIONS OPEN

February 1st, 2026.

Applications due May 15.

Restrictions apply.

Visit [mapleleavesforever.ca/apply-now/](https://mapleleavesforever.ca/apply-now/) for details.

FIND OUT MORE

If you applied and received a MLF planting rebate this year or in years past, we'd love to hear from you and see photos of your native maples!

### 2026 Landscape Ontario Congress January 6 - 8, 2026

Landscape Ontario

# CONGRESS

## TRADE SHOW & CONFERENCE

Est. 1973

Maple Leaves Forever team members Deb Pella Keen (Executive Director) and Mary Bella (Marketing Manager) attended the 2026 LO Congress last week!

It was a great opportunity to connect with some of our nursery partners in person, and learn about their successes and challenges over the past year. We were also pleased to see Trees for Life, an organization of which Maple Leaves Forever is proud to have been a founding sponsor.

*Photos top row: Trees for Life, Uxbridge Nurseries; 2nd row: Winkelmolen Nursery, NVK; 3rd row: Verbinnen's Nursery, Somerville Nurseries; 4th row: Richardson's Pineneedle Farms, Mary & Deb*



**The Gift of Giving -  
Dedicate a Donation**

Maple Leaves Forever is a Registered Canadian Charity, which means your donations are eligible for a charitable tax receipt! Donations make wonderful ecological and socially responsible gifts, allowing you to spread the word about your favourite charities and give generously at the same time.

Consider [donating](#) to Maple Leaves Forever as a gift in the name of your loved ones - you can even send them one of our custom Maple E-cards (like the one below) available through our [website donation portal](#).

[Donate Today!](#)



# Nursery News

## NURSERY PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

### Paul Richardson & Pineneedle Farms Inc A Family Rooted in Trees, Tradition, and Three Generations



*Paul Richardson*

When Paul Richardson talks about trees, he does it the way some people talk about family—warmly, proudly, and with a lifetime of stories tucked into the spaces between sentences. That makes sense. For Paul, family and forestry have always grown together.

Pineneedle Farm is officially a third-generation enterprise—a legacy that began in 1958. Back then, Paul’s father ran W. Richardson Farms, one of the largest Christmas tree growing operations in the region, planting roughly

60,000 trees a year. Paul grew up surrounded by seedlings, soil, and the annual rhythm of the land—though he had no idea at the time what this early education would eventually grow into.

When Paul’s father passed away in 2001, he and his wife, Tracy eventually acquired the property, which soon became Pineneedle Farms Inc.

### **A Basement, Seedling Favours, and the Birth of Pineneedle Farm**

In the early days, the business was modest and hands-on. Paul and Tracy packaged seedling wedding favours on the basement floor for extra income. The work was simple but meaningful, and as demand grew, so did the farm. Today, the seedling favours live on—only now they’re handled by a team of talented young women who work with the Richardsons and, in one case, are soon to officially become part of the family. “They do a fantastic job,” Paul says. “Better than we ever did.”

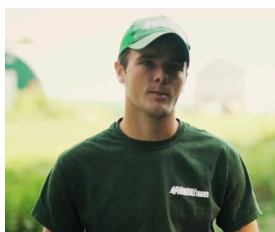
### **Travel, Training, and Tracy’s Patience**

Paul’s journey as a grower has taken him far beyond the boundaries of the farm. He laughs at how much he used to travel—flying to Oregon for two- or three-day meetings on seedling techniques, heading to China for two weeks to teach growers there how to produce trees. Every new idea, every new method, he brought back home.

“Thank God for Tracy,” he says. “She was patient. I was gone a lot. But everything I learned helped us build the business.”



*Lucas Richardson*



*Jeff Richardson*



*Kyle Richardson*

### **Three Sons, Three Generations, and a Greenhouse as Tall as Ambition**

About three years ago, Paul asked his three sons a pivotal question: “*Are you in or out on the business?*”

Their answer was unanimous: *We’re in.*

With that commitment, the family built a massive high-roof greenhouse—so tall that visitors always ask why. Paul loves explaining it: “We built it high to collect the heat in the summer. Costs a bit more to heat, but it gives us an advantage for the species we grow.”

Inside that greenhouse, two of Paul’s sons manage tens of thousands of seedlings—including two-year-old Freeman maples already pushing two metres tall. His oldest, Lucas, focuses on caliper trees for the landscaping market. Between their greenhouses and field operations, the family now produces about 45,000 potted trees a year, along with a wide variety of native maples, evergreens, shrubs, and Carolinian species.



[Continue reading the full article on the MLF Website >](#)

## Put your Nursery in the MLF Spotlight!

Are you one of our Nursery Partners? We want to feature your Nursery in our E-News! We include a feature article about one or more of our Partner Nurseries in each of our quarterly newsletters, on our blog and shared on our social channels.

If your nursery would like to participate with an interview, article or just share some news, please drop a line to Deb Pella Keen, our Executive Director, at: [info@mapleleavesforever.ca](mailto:info@mapleleavesforever.ca).

Our E-newsletter has a growing readership of nearly 2800 recipients, all of whom have expressly chosen to receive our notes to their email, and most of whom live in the Southern Ontario region. Take advantage of this free opportunity to grow awareness about your enterprise!

## Winter Maple Care

### Late November - December

- monitor for tree damage or stress (snow load, ice damage, vandalism and rodent or deer browsing).
- prune only to remove dead, cracked or broken branches.

### January

- monitor for tree damage or stress
- [prepare planting plans](#) for upcoming year
- place order for Native Maples from [nursery](#). (You may be disappointed if you delay doing this now)

### February - March

- monitor trees for over-winter damage and repair as needed
- finalize [planting plans](#)
- contact nursery to arrange for tree pick up or delivery
- [Apply for your Thank You Rebate](#) from Maple Leaves Forever (spring application deadline is May 15 - but you will get better selection if you apply and order your trees early!)

**PRUNING: Native Maples should NOT be pruned during the late winter through spring season.** Bleeding (loss of sap from pruning wounds) can be excessive when maple trees are pruned during this time. Wait until the leaves

have fully formed in mid-summer. Light pruning can also be done in fall. [Learn more about pruning here on our website.](#)

[View our online MAPLE CARE CALENDAR](#)

for more details, year-round maple care & planting advice

### How can you help?



#### TELL A FRIEND!

If you recently received our Thank You Rebate, or you find our tree care information helpful - please share this email with your contacts and encourage them to plant native Canadian maples too!

#### SHARE YOUR MAPLE PHOTOS

We love seeing photos and stories about your maple plantings - please email them to [info@mapleleavesforever.ca](mailto:info@mapleleavesforever.ca).

### Why did I get this email?

We've put together this email news list to inform, update and remind our subsidy applicants, nursery partners, and anyone else who might be interested in our activities and encourage the planting and ongoing care of more native maples in rural Ontario!

We only send 4 emails a year, in Winter, Spring, Summer and Fall. You can [unsubscribe](#) from these mailings at any time. No hard feelings.



#### Maple Leaves Forever

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