

Students advised to please not feed the trees at new campus zoo

U of T greenspace replaces "biological desert"

BY JAY VAN DE WINT

A new greenspace on campus was declared officially open at a small public ceremony last week.

Located on the Southeast corner of the Ramsay Wright Zoological Labs, Zoowoods is part of an experiment to create a natural, self-sustaining ecosystem on campus.

"Twelve months ago the area was only mature trees and grass," said Jim Hodgins, former chair of the department of zoology's landscape committee. "It's been the equivalent of a biological desert for the past quarter of a century."

The site was replanted with a diverse range of plants and trees which replicate the maple/beech forest that once flourished in the area now occupied by Metro Toronto.

White oak, sugar maple, yellow birch, shag bark, hickory, flowering dogwood, and jewel weed are just some of the species which have been re-introduced.

The site also features a pond formed with diverted rainwater. A pump provides circulation in the form of a small waterfall.

Zoowoods conforms to the university's new environmental policy, which calls for the elimi-

nation of pesticides in campus landscaping.

In keeping with the elimination of foreign species, Hodgins said the landscaping committee will eventually request that the city tear out three Norway maples which border Zoowoods on St. George Street.

"Ecologically and aesthetically they have no part in the model we're trying to produce," he said.

Hodgins said Zoowoods will also serve as an educational tool in a variety of ways.

"Some of the ecology courses will be using the site for research projects," he said.

"They'll want to see which insects, birds and micro-organisms move into the new urban sites and which plant species survive in downtown restoration plots."

While Hodgins said he is indebted to groups like the Friends of the Altona Forest and the Canadian Wildflower Society for the assistance they offered, he feels the university's administration could have offered more support.

"Simcoe Hall was very slow to support the project monetarily," he said. "They wanted us to come up with plans for the site, but after two years of planning, they turned down our proposal."

Phil Garment, director of buildings and grounds, said the project took no more time than was necessary.

"The case was presented and it took time to complete," he

said. "It takes a while to put these things together."

"Both sides are happy that we have a project of this significance in place. We're delighted that it's finished."



Happy little trees.

Dan Coughlin

Student Banking Just Got Better!



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