

Make it a Green Christmas

Growing up in New Brunswick, a green Christmas was an anomaly. It was not unusual to have snow as early as Halloween! So a “Green Christmas” was unusual and a bit of a letdown. Fast forward to living in Toronto over fifty years later, and a Green Christmas has become the usual.

Now of course I am referring to snow fall, but there is another interpretation of a “Green Christmas”. A time of reflecting on what is happening in the environment and supporting green initiatives and conservation. As we approach the end of 2024, it is also the time to reflect on charitable donations for tax receipts. I look at conservation in very broad strokes, as I believe that everything is connected. Here are a few of the organizations that I regularly support.

The notes about the organizations explain why they are on my donation list.

Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC)

SOOS has a great working relationship with NCC. If your desire is to preserve habitat and support the stewardship of it, then NCC will be at the top of the list. They support conservation initiatives from coast to coast to coast. NCC also participates in the annual SOOS Orchid Show and Sale.

<https://natureconservancy.ca/en/>

Ontario Nature

Ontario Nature has over 150 member organizations in our province. In addition to conserving habitat, they ensure that important information about government policy changes is available to everyone. They have been instrumental in organizing and educating the public regarding wetlands in Ontario. SOOS has participated in their Youth Summit for Mother Earth, helping to educate the next generation of conservation and environmentalists. Ontario Nature participates in the SOOS annual Orchid Show and Sale.

<https://ontarionature.org/>

Indspire

Indspire is a national organization that supports the First Nations community through promoting and supporting post-secondary education. There is much work to do for true Truth and Reconciliation. This is just one way that you can support the process.

<https://indspire.ca/ways-to-give/>

ecojustice and environmental defense

Both of these organizations support advocacy for the environment by holding governments accountable for their actions. It can range from court cases to lobbying to protests. If you like to have more political activism to your donations, you should look at these organizations.

<https://ecojustice.ca/>

<https://environmentaldefence.ca/>

Ducks Unlimited Canada (DUC)

DUC is the leading organization in Canada preserving wetlands. And yes, that’s where many orchids can be found. DUC is also a leader in supporting environmental research.

<https://www.ducks.ca/>

David Suzuki Foundation

David Suzuki is probably Canada's best-known environmentalist. The Foundation makes available information about climate change and the fossil fuel industry to the public so that they can better understand what is happening with our climate. One of their main focuses is lobbying governments to improve policy and reach agreed to climate targets.

<https://davidsuzuki.org/>

There are many other organizations that work tirelessly to protect the environment, support conservation and promote policy change on environmental issues. Here are a few:

Nature Canada: <https://naturecanada.ca/>

Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society: <https://cpaws.org/>

Council of Canadians: <https://canadians.org/>

As much as I would like to see donations go to an environmental organization, I am also aware that there are many people struggling to make ends meet with the rising cost of living. Food banks are seeing an unsustainable level of new clients, and consequently, also a drop in donations. They need our help. Below is a link to Daily Bread, based here in Toronto. Regardless of where you live, there is a food bank in your neighbourhood. Please consider donating food or funds. Consider donating online as the postal strike has made year end giving a challenge for everyone.

If you can't support them financially, consider volunteering.

<https://www.dailybread.ca/>

And in Ottawa, the Ottawa Food Bank.

<https://www.ottawafoodbank.ca/>

May your Holiday Season be all that you need it to be, however you celebrate.

As we approach the new year, may we continue to be hopeful.



John Alexander

Conservation Committee

[Southern Ontario Orchid Society](https://www.southernorchidsociety.com/)