

REAL *update*

REAL people taking REAL action to protect our environment

Rideau Environmental Action League (REAL)

SEPTEMBER 2025

Inside this issue:

Used the Tool Library Yet? 2

Canada Greener Homes Loans Ending 2

Monarch Garden Team 2

Community Garden Masterpiece 3

Mini Forest Looking Fresh and Healthy 4

REAL Deal News 5

REAL Deal Summer and Yard Staff 6

In REAL Life 7

Online Auction Nov. 12-22 8

Fall Online Auction Nov 12—22, 2025

Preparations are well underway for REAL's online auction, our main fundraiser.

Auction Items. We have some great gently used items we've been setting aside all year from REAL Deal donations. But we would also like to add to the variety with home made things (food, birdhouses, crafts), eco-friendly gifts, tickets and gift certificates for goods or services. Please [contact Donna](#) by October 31 if you have something to offer and to confirm it is suitable. We can continue to add things until we reach our limit of 200 items. Sorry, we are unable to include furniture in this auction.

Sponsors. We will be approaching past sponsors in a separate letter to request a \$50, \$100, \$150 or \$250 sponsorship, but would love to add you to the list.

Bid and Have Fun. Unlike many online auctions, this one is very affordable. There is a good chance you will end up with a treasure that doesn't break the bank. Don't see anything you need? Monetary donations are welcome also.

Tell Your Friends. The more people who know about our auction the better. It really increases the bidding, increases the final purchase prices, and contributes to a general interest in REAL. Most of all it ensures we raise a chunk of cash with which to continue our environmental activities in this community.

More Details. More auction specifics are in the poster on the back page of this Update. Below are few things on the virtual auction block.



Used the Tool Library Yet?

Our tool library is a REAL bargain for local residents. For a membership fee (\$25 for six months, or \$45 for a year) Tool Library members can borrow any one of over 100 tools from our collection for one week at a time. Extensions are permitted if no one else has reserved the tool.

Here is a list of the tools that are borrowed most frequently:

Heat gun	Mitre saw
Spin saw	Multi tool
Cordless pole saw	Paint sprayer
Hedge trimmer	Reciprocating saw
Compressor	Plunge router
Finish nailer	Belt sander
Band Saw	Table saw
Circular saw	Tile cutter
Cordless and corded drills	Tile saw
24' level	Wallpaper steamer
	Deep hole saw kit

See what other tools we have [on our website](#), or drop by before 1 p.m. some day and speak to Phil.

Canada Greener Homes Loan (CGHL) Intake Closing

The CGHL offered homeowners interest-free, repayable loans of up to \$40,000 for energy-efficient home upgrades. But the program's funding will soon be fully allocated, and the application intake will be closing. The last day to submit an application is October 1, 2025.

The pre-retrofit EnerGuide home energy evaluation necessary for the application must also be complete. REAL offers these assessments, which are booked and completed by Alan Leonard.

Many people choose to have an assessment done to learn more about their home and to receive an EnerGuide rating, useful information to have when selling a home.

Please consult REAL's website or [contact Alan](#) for more details.



Many thanks for the great work done by the Monarch Garden team who met most Tuesdays throughout the garden season to maintain the garden on the REAL Deal Site as well as the Depave gardens downtown. The group also looked after a plot in the community garden, donating the produce to the Food Bank. Thanks to Beth, Elizabeth, Lori, the two Carols, Donna, Betty, Joanne, Shirley, Ginny and especially to Marje and Donna for their leadership.

Community Garden Masterpiece by Ginny Toffanello

"My garden is my most beautiful masterpiece" - Claude Monet

There really isn't much work involved in creating a beautiful garden like Monet's. You pick the seeds, 'maybe' germinate the seeds, and then you plant them! The plants then grow into hopeful little sprouts



and mature into fun shapes and colours. In return for a little extra labour (watering, weeding), the plants then continue to thrive and even provide nourishment. Before you know it, a masterpiece has unfolded!



The 2025 garden season started late, then became very hot and dry. In May it was safe to plant some cold-hardy seeds, like carrots, beets, lettuce, and radishes to name a few. Forecasts were still threatening below 0 nights and flurries. In June it was straight

to business with warm days and cool nights. The Monarch Butterfly Team started prepping the gardens and planting new seedlings. Our community gardeners were planting cucumbers, beans, squash, tomatoes etc., and harvesting early radishes, and lettuce. By the end of June/beginning of July the garden was starting to fill out with green and pops of colour. July temperatures were holding in the high 20s, and there was no shortage of work or watering to do. August had some very hot days (highs of 33C!) with very little rain, making it hard for gardeners to spend any



time outside. Under the sun, the seeds we planted in spring/early summer produced a harvest of peas, beans, cucumbers, carrots, beets, tomatoes, potatoes, squash, garlic and more! Our Food Bank garden grew a bounty of tomatoes and cucumbers, making donations through the summer.

It's wild what can happen in four months! Thank you to the REAL staff for keeping our rain barrels full and grass mowed!



And thanks to Ginny for coordinating the garden this year and her wonderful photos of all of REAL's garden projects. More photos will be posted on Facebook and on our webpage shortly. (Yes, those are Brussel sprouts!)

Mini Forest Looking Fresh and Healthy



In late July several volunteers and REAL's gardening group spent a couple of hours removing many weeds that were starting to crowd out the trees. The mini forest did well through most of the July/August drought, but eventually it needed help, and the town put the mini forest on their watering schedule with Gemmell's. The Mini Forest is now looking fresh and healthy. The trees have grown significantly over the summer. It looks like we will need to do one more weeding of the forest in October, date to be determined, and will likely be looking for volunteers for that.

We are looking at planting some pocket forests (a smaller version of the mini forest) at some other Smiths Falls locations. One possibility is against the front fence of the Heritage House Museum. We have also been talking to the Railway Museum of Eastern Ontario about doing some planting around the play structure they have planned, possibly two pocket forests and a pollinator garden. We may be able to prepare the site later this fall, but we may need to wait until the spring of 2026.

The mini forest at Hyland Park June 20. Also about this time a cubic meter of biochar was applied to the right half of the forest.



Some of the folks who helped weed the mini forest on the morning of July 23. We ended up with eight yard waste bags worth. See more photos on [REAL's Facebook page](#). We are hoping to find a suitable local location for some pocket forests to demonstrate something that more people could plant on their own properties.

REAL Deal News

What a summer that was – so hot and so dry. The heat seemed to keep some of the customers and donors away, so our sales suffered. We had to close the yard early some days as it was just too hot for staff to be out there. Lots of Powerade and popsicles were consumed! Thanks to Arnold, Wolf, Marshall, Jaxon, Karter and high school volunteer Davin for toughing it out.

Between Lorne and Phil a number of improvements were made including a new picnic table and a coat of paint for the old one, restraining the garden bench, a new bike rack for bikes we are selling, garden box repairs, and repaired trailer steps. Phil repaired our glass sign case, installed a butterfly lifecycle sign and added a couple of bulletin boards all while keeping the tool library in order.

We are always trying to promote something to keep stuff from piling up. Lighting, rocking chairs, and art were recently featured. Our fall and Halloween décor is out and summer stuff, like BBQs, bikes and patio furniture are 50% off. We have freed a lot of books throughout the summer, which is much preferable to the blue box. The 25% off merchandise for students was on all summer, but not a lot of people took advantage of it.

We finally came to the end of the Trinity United Church mushroom compost Sept 13, but there is still lots of biochar to be had for \$15 a bag. We also have an unusually large number of unsold rain barrels. So come on over if you would like to take an ugly duckling terracotta (\$60) or ugly duckling black (\$55) barrel home.

Beside moving a lot of usable materials, we moved along a lot of other materials like milk bags, pens, batterie, print cartridges and various fabric items. Please don't bring us clothing, beddings or draperies, it just makes extra work for us to take them somewhere that accepts them.



Alesha at REAL's table at the Friends of the Tay Watershed Discovery Day August 16 in Perth's Crystal Palace. We had a draw for a rain barrel. .

That same day the REAL DEAL participated in the Big Thrift Event along with nine other Smiths Falls thrift stores. The event was organized to mark National Thrift Day, August 17. We saw lots of extra traffic in the store as a result. REAL was one of the lemonade stops! We also raffled a gift basket of REAL Deal goodies (thanks, Brenda!), and contributed a \$20 gift certificate to towards the grand prize of \$200 in gift certificates for some lucky shopper.



Organizers of the Open Air Market at Smiths Falls Centennial Park allocate one spot per week to community groups. REAL's turn was Friday, September 5. Three people won a \$15 REAL Deal gift certificate. We were surprised at the number of people who already knew about and supported our store.

REAL Deal Summer and Yard Staff

Three staff had completed their summer employment by August 30. Karter and Alesha were hired thanks to the federal Summer Jobs Canada program. We wish them well with their future endeavours! We had a little send-off lunch for them on Friday, August 29 (thanks Diane!) From left to right above are Karter, Jaxon and Alesha. Commented Alesha: *Being at the REAL deal has been my absolute favourite summer opportunity so far. I got to meet many lovely people, and work on some cool projects, one of which was attending the Friends of the Tay watershed event in Perth. Seeing the passion and dedication that goes into the work being done was something that made it a truly unique experience.* Below are our regular staff, from left to right: Marshall, Chester, Arnold and Wolf.



In REAL Life

Scrap Metal. Did you know we will accept scrap metal at the REAL Deal? We have a large open topped scrap metal bin (next to our garbage dumpster), which is primarily for store use. But we will also accept metal from the public in this bin. Items must be small enough to be thrown in. So no stoves, exercise bikes, lawn mowers and the like. Please check with yard staff first. Sorry, we do not permit dumpster diving in our scrap metal bin, as it is dangerous. The bin is picked up by a local company, Falls Iron and Metal, and REAL earns a bit of money for it.



Creepy Dolls. One thing we get lots of and can't seem to move is collector dolls. We happened to hear about the [Creepy Doll Museum](#), which accepts dolls, preferably a little flawed with cracked skulls, missing eyes or hair. They agreed to take some of these beauties off of our hands. Thanks to smalls volunteer Christine Must two totes of the dolls were delivered to Peterborough in late September, hopefully in time for their Halloween debuts. This collection does go on tour and will be in Kingston Oct 24 and 25 if you are interested.



Electronics. The Town of Smiths Falls is reminding residents that electronics, chargers and damaged batteries should never be placed in recycle bins or garbage cans, as they can cause fires in collection trucks and sorting facilities. Take them to safe drop-off sites such as the Smiths Falls REAL Deal Store. Batteries and circuit boards contain toxic materials that can leach into soil and water. Besides being more environmentally safe, depositing these materials at the REAL Deal also earns REAL a little bit of money.



The REAL Deal is an Idle Free Zone. Please, do not leave your car engine running while in our store or unloading donations (or at lock crossings, while waiting to pick someone up, waiting for a train to go by etc.) It wastes gas, costs you money, contributes to air pollution, and is harmful to our health. At the REAL Deal there may be people browsing the free table and they do not want to be exposed to your car exhaust. We don't want it wafting into the store either. A sign from our 2006-2008 Idle Free campaign has been posted near the customer door as a reminder.



Plants. The REAL Deal will accept houseplants, outdoor plants or seedlings by donation. Sometimes we may have to offer the outdoor plants for free if they are not moving quickly enough, as our "garden centre" behind the store can get very hot. The houseplants are always popular and move quickly, as do large artificial indoor trees.



Christmas Donations. It hardly seems possible that we will be putting our Christmas merchandise out soon. We have collected more than we have any other year and it is taking a lot of room upstairs. It will take a while before the centre aisle of the store is full, but we aim to replenish often, and have it all out on the shelves by the end of November. If you have something large to donate, like full size trees, inflatables, totes full of garland, or big wooden cut outs, please get it to us sooner rather than later so we can pass it on to a new home for a reasonable price.

**RIDEAU ENVIRONMENTAL
ACTION LEAGUE**

Box 1061
Smiths Falls ON
K7A 5A5
info@REALaction.ca

www.REALaction.ca

**REAL Deal Store &
Environment Centre**

85 William St. W.
Smiths Falls ON
613-283-7999

Open Wednesday
through Saturdays
10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

**Ask about our
Tool Library**

For Home Energy Audits,
contact Alan Leonard at:
alanleonard9@gmail.com

**Find us on
Facebook and
Instagram**

Send contributions to the
December issue by November
15 to dhicks11@cogeco.ca
or call Barb at (613) 283-9966

REAL people taking REAL action to protect our environment



**REAL'S
ONLINE
AUCTION**

Wed. Nov. 12 9:00 am to Sat. Nov. 22 9:00 p.m.

32Auctions.com/REAL2025

**CLOSE TO 200 ITEMS TO BID ON:
COLLECTIBLES | CHRISTMAS | LOCAL SERVICES |
ENTERTAINMENT | ART | HOME AND GARDEN**

Winners can pick up their items
starting Wed. Nov. 26
at the REAL Deal Store
85 William St. W, Smiths Falls
Wed - Sat 10 am - 5 pm

Most entries are gently used items
donated to the REAL Deal.
Additional donations gratefully
accepted. Contact Donna at
andisondj@gmail.com

*Support environmental action
in our community*
www.REALaction.ca

Made with PosterMyWall.com

**Make a
REAL
Difference**

Please return this form to:
REAL
Box 1061
Smiths Falls, ON
K7A 5A5

Or bring to
The REAL Deal

Make a Donation

☐ I would like to make
a donation of

\$ _____

A charitable receipt for
income tax purposes will
be issued. To donate by
credit card, go to
www.Canadahelps.org.

Volunteer

☐ I want to help

Become a Member

I would like to become a member

- ☐ Individual membership \$15
☐ Family membership \$20
☐ Student membership \$5
☐ Corporate membership \$50

Join our Email List

Use the green signup button on the
bottom of our homepage.

Contact Information

Name

Street/RR Address

Town, Province

Postal Code

Home Phone

Work Phone

Best time to reach me

Email address