

The Great White Oak

Some members of the Bay Cloverhill Community Association were fortunate enough to make a trip to local wood artisans Just Be Woodsy in March 2023. When the 200 year old Great White Oak was removed from Queen’s Park North in 2020, a plan with University Rosedale Councillor Mike Layton, City of Toronto Parks, Forestry and Recreation Department and the Bay Cloverhill Community Association was hatched to convert the 11 and 14 foot sections of the trunk into benches that would return to the Bay Cloverhill community. In late March 2023, one section of the trunk was being milled as part of the process of creating a twelve foot two sided Victorian style bench that will be installed close to the original location of the tree in Summer 2023. The other large portion of the trunk will become benches that will be installed at the University of Toronto St. George Campus as part of its landscaping improvements.



Milling of the Great White Oak

The Process

Just Be Woodsy works with arborists, the City’s Park, Forestry and Recreation Department and contractors to utilize the wood of trees that must be cut down due to location, age or illness. Once a local Toronto tree is cut down, portions of the trunk are taken to the Just Be Woodsy workshop. The salvaged wood is stored for at least a few weeks before being milled into sections. The next step is to put the wood into a massive electric kiln to dry out for 5 days.

The refined wood is then turned into unique and useful furniture and décor items. Beeswax oil moistures the unstained wood and retains the beauty of each individual tree. Each piece of wood is laser marked with the type of tree and the geographic coordinates of its original location.

A Strong Voice for A Strong Community

JUST BE WOOSY – GREAT WHITE OAK BENCH



Kathryn Holden, Robert Jarvis, Wood Drying Kiln
Marilyn Tait McClellan, and
Jack Candido in front of a Beech stump



Workshop

Types of Trees

Toronto has 212 different species of trees. They vary from soft wood to hard wood, heavy to light, patterned to variegated, light yellow colour to dark brown. So far, the following types of wood have been recovered:

- | | | |
|-------------------|-------------------------|------------------|
| 1. Silver maple | 11. Horse chestnut | 21. Butternut |
| 2. Norway maple | 12. Honey locust | 22. Birch |
| 3. Red maple | 13. Black locust | 23. Beech |
| 4. Sugar maple | 14. Juniper | 24. Cottonwood |
| 5. Manitoba maple | 15. Eastern White Cedar | 25. Apricot |
| 6. White ash | 16. American elm | 26. Plum |
| 7. Green Ash | 17. Siberian Elm | 27. Chokecherry |
| 8. Red Oak | 18. Red/White Mulberry | 28. Black Cherry |
| 9. Black Oak | 19. Tree of Heaven | 29. Apple |
| 10. White Oak | 20. Black walnut | 30. Crabapple |

A Strong Voice for A Strong Community

JUST BE WOODSY – GREAT WHITE OAK BENCH

- 31. Pear
- 32. Russian Olive

- 33. Catalpa
- 34. Linden



Silver maple trunk



Moss Park honey locust in front, U of T Siberian Elm behind

The History

In 2016, Robert Jarvis recognized that downtown trees provided an opportunity to turn waste into beautiful furniture and décor that would eliminate landfill dumping. It is the ultimate in recycling, by recognizing that the urban forest could be honoured by continuing to serve Toronto residents in a different format. When trees have to be removed for construction or if the tree is unhealthy or in danger of breaking, the City of Toronto Parks, Forestry and Recreation Department and professional arborists cooperate with coordinating selected trunks or branches to be given to Just Be Woodsy.

The workshop was first located in a former slaughterhouse at 2 Tecumseth Street in the Niagara neighbourhood. As often happens in downtown Toronto, the location was slated to become a condominium development. The workshop moved to 772 Warden Avenue in the Golden Mile area in 2022.

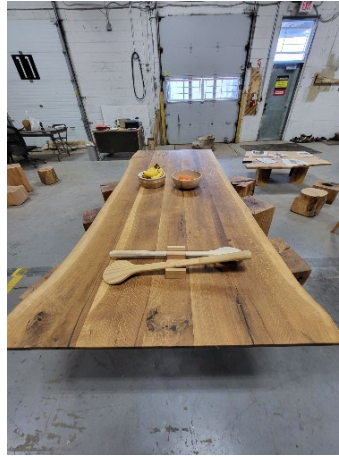
In addition to selling beautifully crafted tables, benches, cubes, shelves and charcuterie boards plus more, Just Be Woodsy offers workshops where you can learn about the urban forest and refine your woodworking skills. Custom design is an option, as is the creation of a statement art piece. The showroom is currently open Friday afternoons, or by appointment, however opening hours may be extended soon. If you want to learn more, visit their website at www.justbewoodsy.com, email connect@justbewoodsy.com or call 647-515-8998.

A Strong Voice for A Strong Community

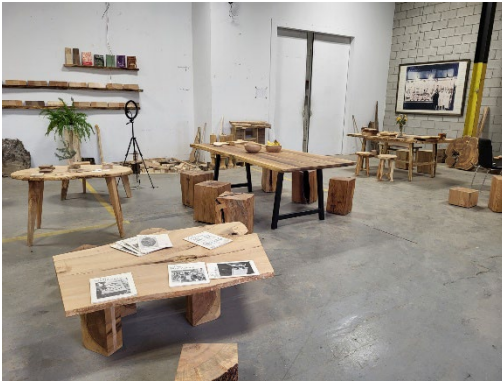
JUST BE WOOSY – GREAT WHITE OAK BENCH



Silver maple table and chairs



White oak table



Showroom



Bee Motel

A Strong Voice for A Strong Community