



*The best time to plant a tree
was twenty years ago.
The second best time is now.*
ANONYMOUS

Tree Planting Tips

Why Plant Trees?

Tree planting is the most popular Earth Day event and one of the most common activities people associate with helping the Earth. Millions of trees are planted by Canadians each year. Planting is an act of putting down roots and contributing to the future. The simple act of planting a tree, helps the environment in so many ways.

Trees...

- filter pollution from the air
- help recycle water
- prevent soil loss
- create shade
- give shelter from wind and rain
- provide homes for animals
- make food for humans and wildlife
- provide an interesting, soothing, learning environment for children and your community
- and much more!

Without trees, there would be no life on this planet!

Getting Started - Tree Planting Basics

Plan Ahead, Define Objectives And Set Goals

Decide why you want to plant trees (what you hope to accomplish) and who you want/need to include in your project. Get *everyone* involved from the outset. Establish your short-and long-term objectives. Fundraise!

Select A Suitable Location

Test the soil. Some trees grow better in dry, sandy soils and others grow better in wet soil. Every kind of tree has its own needs. Check the soil's pH, salinity, nutrients, etc.

Make A Map

Draw a map of your site, indicating where the trees will be planted. Ask a landscape architect or forester to help you design an ideal project plan for your site.



Select Tree Species

- Choose trees that like the soil and moisture conditions of your site (this will reduce maintenance tasks, such as extra watering and fertilizing).
- Pick species that are **native** to your area, as these are best adapted to the local climate and soil conditions, flourish without chemical applications, provide food and shelter to local wildlife and represent part of your natural heritage and biodiversity.
- Coniferous trees are generally recommended over deciduous trees, as they have a better chance of surviving and require less care.
- Although young trees with established root systems stand a better chance of survival, seedlings and small shrubs are easier for kids to plant. Proper handling and planting of seedlings should be discussed beforehand.

Choose A Planting Date And Get Insurance

You must have insurance in case of an accident.

Prepare Your Site

You may need to clean up the site, dig up the soil, cut the grass, pull weeds, mark the zone(s) where trees are to be planted, or do other things to get the area ready for the big tree planting day.

Tree Planting Day

Be Sure To Have The Essentials

- **Shovels** to dig holes and **buckets** to carry trees and water.
- Proper **footwear** (avoid sandals) and **clothing** (long pants, short-sleeved shirt, sweater and raincoat, hat and work gloves) and **sunscreen**.
- **Nourishment** (a full day's work requires a hearty lunch and lots of cold drinks).
- **Shelter** to protect people and equipment from rain or hot sun.
- Washroom facilities.

Be Good Tree Planters

TAKE YOUR TIME. Don't rush to plant hundreds of trees. It is better to make sure that a few trees are planted carefully and are well-cared for. Start small and manageable and grow in stages.

Have Fun!

Enjoy your site—now and in the future. Gradually transform the ugly, barren, unused asphalt sprawl of your school ground (or community area) into a place of beauty, inspiration and education. Enhance your students' learning experience by incorporating your green, ecological outdoor classroom into all subjects of your school's curriculum.



How To Plant Seedlings

- Dig a hole wide and deep enough to cover the root system.
- Handle seedlings by the base of the stem, taking care not to bruise the bark.
- Lay the roots straight down the hole in a natural arrangement. Do not bunch, spiral, double-over or bend roots.
- Keep stones and twigs out of the hole (they create air pockets that dry out roots).
- Plant seedlings slightly above the root collar swelling.
- Cover with soil. Do not bury live branches or foliage, or leave any roots exposed to the air.
- Tamp soil firmly with toe (not the heel) to remove air pockets.
- Create a mulched area around the tree that is 50 percent larger than the spread of the branches and five to 10 centimetres deep. Wood chips or shredded pine or cedar bark are great mulch, as are oak leaves and pine needles.

Caring For Your Trees

Baby trees need to be looked after for three to five years after planting. Growing trees require nutrients, water, sunlight and room to grow. You can help by watering, weeding, adding compost to the soil and mulch to the tree bases, and by protecting the trees from animals and the weather. Create a schedule of planting and maintenance tasks (schools especially, need to incorporate summer stewardship tasks).



Projects And Activities

Starting Your Garden Plants from Seed

By Miriam Goldberger, president and native plant expert, Wildflower Farm www.wildflowerfarm.com, your wildflower source.

- 1. Helps your garden get a head start.**
- 2. Saves money over buying “already grown” plants.**
- 3. Makes a great in-class project.**

Starting plants from seed is a very gratifying experience, one that is not as difficult as many people think. Unless you are planting a wildflower meadow, I recommend that you start your seeds indoors. This allows the seeds the best conditions in which to germinate and removes the possibility of competition from weeds. Most people do not have a greenhouse, but almost everyone has a sunny window ledge that can provide an ideal space to start your seeds.

It's best to sow the seeds in a sterile, soil-less mix you can purchase at your local garden centre. As a rule of thumb, plant the seeds at a depth of twice the diameter of the seed. Some seeds, however, require light to germinate and should be placed on the surface of the soil mix. Keep the soil moist but not wet, and never allow it to dry out. A hand-held mist sprayer is ideal for this. Almost all seeds will germinate at average household temperatures of 18-21°C (65-70°F). You'll need to exercise some patience as some seeds will germinate within a few days while others may take a few weeks.

For other tree-/forest-related activities, check out the other printable PDFs in the Science & Nature section

http://www.ecokidsonline.com/pub/fun_n_games/printables/activities/index.cfm.

Or http://www.ecokidsonline.com/pub/eco_info/topics/forests/index.cfm for information about forests and trees.

Possible Funding Sources For School Ground And Community Planting Projects

Td Friends Of The Environment Foundation

Provides assistance to communities, organizations and individuals involved in establishing environmental programs. Visit the branch nearest you for an application form, or <http://www.fef.ca> for more information and an online form.

Canadian Tire Community Environmental Awards

Encourages associate store employees to sponsor applications initiated by schools, community groups and non-profit organizations. Contact your local store's branch manager for an application form or visit www.canadiantire.ca for more information.

Mountain Equipment Co-Op

Provides information on how to apply for regional funding and on the types of projects that have been funded in the past (log onto www.mec.ca and look for the MEC Community link for more information). Contact your local store for a funding application.

Tree Plan Canada

Offers funding and/or technical expertise to planting groups (www.treecanada.ca).

Your Own Fundraising Initiatives

- Create fundraising projects to generate funds and solicit financial support. Be sure to offer promotional benefits to donors.
- Contact local businesses to sponsor part of your forest. Provide them with a plaque on the forest grounds recognizing their contribution.
- Contact your local nursery for donations of seedlings or mature trees.
- Ask your local government about what resources and funding grants they have available for community tree planting projects.
- Visit your local philanthropy centre to peruse the directory of foundations to discover the ones that fund community planting projects.
- Encourage each student/family to contribute to the forest by buying one seedling. Each seedling can be tagged with the donor family's name.

Other Tree Planting Resources

Greening Canada: A Guide to Community Tree Planting

The Conservation Council of Ontario © 1994 Supply and Services Canada.
ISBN 0-662-22122-2.

The Simple Act of Planting A Tree: Healing Your Neighborhood, Your City, and Your World. © 1990 TreePeople with Andy and Katie Lipkis. ISBN 0-87477-602-3.

American Forests web site.

<http://www.americanforests.org/resources/howtoplanttrees/>

School Ground Transformation Resources

Greening School Grounds: Creating Habitats for Learning

Edited by Tim Grant and Gail Littlejohn © 2001 Green Teacher/New Society, Toronto
www.greenteacher.com

All Hands in the Dirt: A Guide to Designing and Creating Natural School Grounds

© 2000 Evergreen. ISBN 0-9681078-3-4 www.evergreen.ca

Canadian Biodiversity Institute's School Ground Transformation web site at

www.schoolgrounds.ca.

