



## **Spreading the Word**

*Sharing your success  
with others*

## Engage children in the magic of planting



Children see the wonder in what adults often find ordinary. The experience of watching a seedling sprout from a seed is truly magical. To a child providing care for their own plant brings a sense of potential and responsibility.

**Note:** The Sacramento Tree Foundation has a thoughtful curriculum called *Seed to Seedling*. Its lessons focus on students growing seedlings from acorns.

**Directions:** Take your child to the nursery and have them choose something to grow. Provide a category: shade tree, shrub, flower, herb, vegetable. You may want to grow something from seed. Consider sprouting the seed in a clear plastic cup so your child can watch its progress. Once the seedling is ready, have your child plant it in an appropriate spot in the ground or in a large planter.



Teach your child to water the plant. Talk about the plant's growth with your child and share their excitement. Encourage them to write about or draw the plant as it grows in a project journal. Point out the diverse greenery in your local forest and help them compare the plants to their own plant.

Areas of Interest:

Fun for kids, Physical labor, Teaching, Writing

Ingredients:

Seeds or potted plants, Water, Sunlight  
Soil, Journal



## Conduct tree tours

**D**o your friends and neighbors know they live in a forest? Do you know people who are familiar with local trees, plants or birds? Assemble a group of varying ages for a special tour and watch their interest grow.

**Directions:** Define an area where you live with interesting and unusual trees. Learn the answers to the following questions:

- What tree species grow there?
- How do you identify each species?
- What are the unique colors and characteristics of each species?
- What types of birds and animals are drawn to your local trees?
- Which are the oldest trees? How old are they?
- What is the neighborhood tree planting history?
- How have these trees been used? (For example, medicines or foods)

*Do not expect yourself to be an expert! People will appreciate the opportunity to learn and explore along with whatever information you have.*

Once you have some answers, set a date and organize a walk. Invite kids, adults, business people, neighbors, and members of local community organizations.<sup>1</sup> Once you have some experience, advertise a walk in your neighborhood for people you do not know. Create a flyer and distribute it.

When you finish a tour, request feedback from the participants. Make this an opportunity to brainstorm projects you and your neighbors can develop for your local forest.

<sup>1</sup> Some possible examples are your local PTA, neighborhood association, home owners association, tenants association, neighborhood watch committee, church, city council, or county board of supervisors.

Areas of Interest:

Looking around, Networking, Teaching, Thinking & Investigating, Walking

Ingredients:

Experience with your local forest,  
Friends and neighbors, Paper for flyers



## *Tell your stories*

**I**n your community many people would love to hear about the work that you are doing. Sharing your success encourages others to continue in their work and inspires the creation of new projects and partnerships.

**Directions:** Identify groups meeting regularly that address the needs of your community. Examples are your local PTA, neighborhood association, homeowners association, tenants association and neighborhood watch committee.

Start with one organization. Obtain their meeting dates and the president's name. Contact the president, explain the work your organization is doing and ask if they would be interested in placing you on their meeting agenda to make a presentation.

When you make your presentation, offer a clear idea of how people can get involved. Distribute flyers for an upcoming project or meeting. Use photographs or slides to highlight your story. Share your excitement and create a clear image of your local forest efforts and goals.



Areas of Interest:

Networking, Teaching,

Ingredients:

Stories of local forest action, Flyers of upcoming events or meetings, Photographs or slides

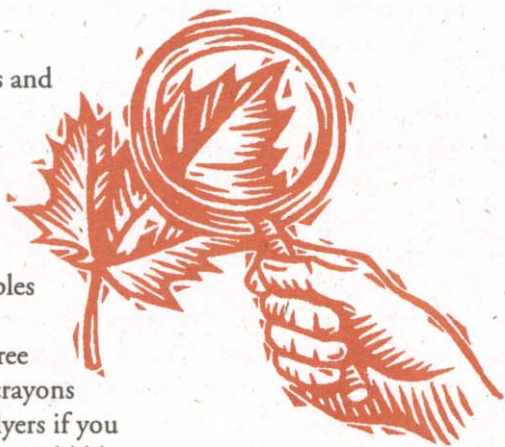


## Educate children on the many benefits of trees

**H**ow many benefits from trees can you name? You may be surprised how many your average group of students – of any age – can name. By inviting them to share their knowledge, you can serve as a mirror, reflecting their own tree enthusiasm back to them.

**Directions:** Set up a meeting with a youth group at your place of worship, school, park or neighborhood center. Request each student adopt a tree<sup>1</sup> prior to your visit. Begin your discussion by asking what they know about their adopted tree.

Ask them what they like about trees and why. It is not critical to cover every single benefit. Rather, share your passion with the students and invite them to share theirs. Bring a “bag of tricks” appropriate for the age group. This might include samples of tree parts, such as seeds, acorns, trunks, branches, bark and leaves; tree stories; photographs or slides; and crayons and paper to draw pictures. Bring flyers if you have a current project or ask if they would like to organize their own project.



Most importantly encourage their imaginations. By the time you leave, they should have a clear understanding of the possibilities trees offer.

<sup>1</sup> See “Adopt a tree: Activity 2”

Areas of Interest:

Fun for kids, Teaching, Thinking & Investigating

Ingredients:

Passion for your local forest, Seedlings, Leaves, Bark, Stories, Photographs/slides, Paper, Crayons



## Remind neighbors to remove tree stakes

**N**urseries generally sell trees with a tall, narrow stake tied tightly to the tree. The stake makes the tree look more appealing. (Who wants a drooping tree?) Many people do not know these stakes must be removed when planting the tree.

We generally place two larger stakes on either side of the tree and attach ties to help the young tree stand straight. The tree should not be staked longer than necessary. A tree will grow much stronger when allowed to move freely. Usually staking the tree for one year is sufficient time for a strong trunk to grow.

**Directions:** If you come across a tree with a *nursery* stake attached, consider removing it immediately or talk with the owner about its removal. Be sure tree stakes are available for support if it does not stand without the nursery stake. Simply cut the plastic ties and pull it out. If it is firmly lodged in the roots, use a handsaw to carefully cut it close to the ground.

Look for staked trees that seem over a year old or generally capable of standing on their own. Cut or remove the ties and observe the tree. If it can not stand straight, then re-tie it to the stakes.<sup>1</sup> If it stands proudly, pull out the tree stakes.

Create a campaign to identify trees unnecessarily tied to stakes. Educate local businesses, landscapers and developers about stake removal.

<sup>1</sup> See "Staking" in Appendix A: How to Plant a Tree

Areas of Interest:

Looking around, Networking, Teaching,

Ingredients:

Scissors, Hand saw, Good pair of eyes



## Create service projects

**W**ith how many groups do you and your family have an association? Consider your workplace, school, college, place of worship, social club and service organizations. These groups frequently have service projects that could benefit our local forests.

**Directions:** Contact the group's Project Chair and ascertain when the committee will be considering projects for the year. Ask the group what their current priorities are or if they are open to new ideas. If you have a current project, invite members to participate. People may become inspired after participating in an event.

Suggest the group initiate its own local tree project. Consider ideas appropriate for the membership and suitable for your area. Share this Guidebook as a menu of project choices. Once the group chooses a project, encourage them to take a leadership role. They may look to you to coordinate the event, but ideally, they will take ownership in organizing it. If possible, step aside and let them plan it.

After the event, keep the group informed of your activities. With any luck, the group will take an active role in future projects, with or without you.

*Though I do not believe that a plant will spring up where no seed has been, I have great faith in a seed. Convince me that you have a seed there, and I am prepared to expect wonders.*

— Henry David Thoreau

Areas of Interest:

Fun for kids, Networking, Physical labor, Teaching,

Ingredients:

NeighborWoods Guidebook, Enthusiastic volunteers, Ideas of what could be



## Celebrate Arbor Day

**A**rbor Day is a special celebration. It is the one day each year set aside for everyone to appreciate trees. In addition to National Arbor Day, most states have their own Arbor Day.

**Directions:** California celebrates Arbor Day on Luther Burbank's birthday, March 7. Contact the National Arbor Day Foundation<sup>1</sup> for your state's Arbor Day. National Arbor Day is the last Friday in April. Arbor Day is a great opportunity for you to appear before your elected officials and share your stories. In turn, request from them an official Arbor Day proclamation recognizing the value of trees in your area, and the responsibility of everyone to be involved.

In preparing for Arbor Day you may consider sponsoring a poster contest in partnership with your local school or school district. Solicit local businesses for potential prizes. Create flyers and find a place to post the contest entries. Local winners can be entered in the National Arbor Day Foundation's annual contest.

You can also contact the National Arbor Day Foundation to receive their free "Celebrate Arbor Day!" packet. Organize a skit, hold a poetry reading or offer historic tours of the trees in your area. A community tree planting effort is another option. Brainstorm with your friends and co-workers ways to express appreciation for the trees in your local forest.

<sup>1</sup> 100 Arbor Avenue, Nebraska City, NE, 68410. 402-474-5655.

Areas of Interest:

Technology, Connecting to government, Fun for kids, Networking

Ingredients:

Flyers, Party supplies, Creativity



## Publicize your story

**T**he media is always looking for local interest stories. How would you like to see your favorite tree in the local paper's headlines? How about a TV report on your school tree planting? The media does not know your story exists until you tell them.

### Directions:

*Take a photograph of your favorite tree* – Outline the full story of the tree: how it got there, what type it is, how old it is, where people can find it and why you find it so appealing. Contact the editor of the Home and Garden Section of your local paper. Learn their submission requirements and be persistent.

*Write a letter to the editor of your local paper appreciating the urban forest* – Share your thoughts and your concerns in an editorial piece. Encourage your fellow community members to take action with you. Express the thoughts you want your elected officials to know. If you are knowledgeable about tree care, share some helpful or timely technical information.

*Inform the press of your urban forest activities* – Prepare press releases before your plantings, tree tours, community garden creations or Arbor Day celebrations. Include the date, time, and location of your event. Give the story a creative title and write one or two short paragraphs describing what journalists can expect. Put the name and phone number of a project contact in the upper left-hand corner and mail or fax it to all local TV stations and newspapers. Give each station or paper a reminder call a couple of days before the event.

*Develop a relationship with the media* – Find out which writers or assignment editors have particular interest in local trees and community action. Be sure to thank those members of the media who do respond and keep them informed of your activities.

Areas of Interest: Technology, Networking, Writing

Ingredients: Fax machine, Camera, Telephone, Computer

