



Lesson Plan: Planting a Tree

This lesson plan was adapted with permission from  NatureBridge.
www.naturebridge.org

Goal: Students will research native trees and plants where they live, and the significance of those plants to the habitat. The students will then participate in a service project planting trees in their community to gain an understanding of stewardship.

Assessment: Students will participate in a service project in their own community to gain understanding of stewardship. Students will also learn about basic plant needs.

Age Group: Grades 1-3

Time: 1-2 hours

Materials:

- Tree saplings
- Soil
- Shovels
- Hoses or watering cans and a water source
- Hand lenses
- Bug boxes (optional)

Background Information for Teachers

In addition to the beauty, shade and habitat trees provide, they create oxygen and contribute to clean air. Many communities in the United States encourage volunteers to help plant and care for trees. It's important to select trees native to where you live. Native trees occur naturally in a particular area. They provide food and shelter for native animals. Invasive tree species originate elsewhere and are brought to an area by people, often accidentally. Invasive species have survival and reproductive characteristics that out-compete native plant species, so they can take over habitats formerly occupied by native plants. A common example of an invasive tree species is the Amur maple in Minnesota, native to China, Manchuria and Japan.

Preparation

- Research which native trees grow best in local parks, neighborhoods or schoolyards.
- Contact plant nurseries for advice about where, when and how to plant and care for trees. Ask them to donate saplings.
- Obtain necessary permission to plant trees.
- Contact local utility companies to avoid planting where there are hidden pipes or cables.

- Optional: Inquire at local nurseries, park agencies or rental companies about whether they can donate an auger (machine that digs holes quickly) and someone to operate it.

Activity

- Brainstorm with students what a plant needs to survive. Introduce what's needed for planting: water, soil and tools.
- Teach students how to use tools safely.
- Divide students into planting teams.
- Go to planting site. If you haven't obtained the use of an auger, have students dig holes slightly larger and deeper than the pots holding saplings.
- While one student from each team digs, other students examine soil with hand lenses. They can examine worms, insects or other creatures they find.
- Students remove the trees and all attached soil from the pots and place them in the holes.
- Students pat down the soil to eliminate air gaps, which can damage roots.
- Place bugs and worms on the soil to allow them to burrow back in.
- Water trees.
- Take photos of students with the trees.
- Designate students to take care of the trees afterward according to the instructions received from staff at the plant nurseries.

Extensions

- Create interpretive signs about the tree species and the value of tree-planting.
- Learn about the underground animals observed, drawing them and writing about life underground from the animals' perspective.
- Write to government officials informing them of their project. Post any responses.
- Write a letter to the local newspaper, accompanied by photos of their activities.
- Chart the growth and changes observed in the trees throughout the school year.

Minnesota Teaching Standards

1st Grade

Science: 1.4.2.1.1, 1.4.3.1.1

Language Arts: 1.8.1.1

2nd Grade

Science: 2.4.1.1.1, 2.4.2.1.1, 2.4.3.1.1

Language Arts: 2.8.1.1

3rd Grade

Science: 3.1.1.2.3, 3.1.3.4.1, 3.4.1.1.2

Language Arts: 3.8.1.1