TOYOTA | EVERGREEN
LEARNING GROUNDS
Imagine your city with nature

Call before you dig!
Ensure that you have obtained all necessary permits for planting. Check with your school facilities department, gas, power, cable and phone companies to ensure there are no cables or pipes below ground where you plan to dig. It's the law!

Remember
Reward hardworking students and volunteers with snacks and drinks throughout the day.

ORGANIZING YOUR PLANTING DAY

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT!

When to plant?

- Fall is a great time to plant trees and shrubs, as they will get off to an early growing start in the spring.
- If you plant in the spring, growth and adjustment to conditions will be slower.

Select a Date

- Choosing a special event to connect your planting event will help attract attention to your project and will provide opportunities for people to participate. Some suggestions are: Earth Day, Arbor Day, Wildlife Week, Pitch-in Week, Environment Day, dedications, retirement and graduation.
- Make sure the date coincides with the availability and delivery of your plant material.
- If possible, arrange for delivery early in the morning of your planting day. If it's delivered the day before, it needs to be stored safely in a holding area.
- Site preparation can be done before your planting day.
- Be prepared. Always schedule a rain date for your event.

Prepare Your Site For Planting

- Sod can be eliminated by: solarizing to kill the grass by covering it with black plastic for three months; or removing the grass manually; or smothering it with thick newspaper or cardboard and covering it with wood chips spread 15 cm thick.
- Holes for trees can be dug the day before planting and marked off for safety.

Consider Safety

- Demonstrate how to use tools safely (see sidebar on the next page).
- If there's a lot of equipment being carried around it's a good idea that rules are established in advance.
- Assign someone to watch for unsafe practices.
- Provide gloves for students and volunteers.
- Always have a First Aid Kit on hand.
- Send home permission/information forms as required by your school administration.
- Check on liability issues with respect to volunteers who attend the event. Some administrations require waivers to be signed.

Rally the Troops

- Supervisors are needed for teaching, safety, quality control and to ensure that everyone is occupied.
- Students and volunteers work well in teams of two to three.
- Teams can complete the whole planting process: one person digs, another plants, and a third mulches and waters OR each team can specialize in one task area, i.e. one team digs, another plants, another mulches and the fourth team follows with watering.
- Work with custodial staff to manage the dirt being tracked into the schools, (i.e. students need to change their shoes if conditions are muddy).
- Arrange for a clean-up crew.

Safety Tips for Planting Tools

- Carry tools by their handles keeping them off the ground
- Walk when carrying tools
- Store tools standing up or with the sharp edge down on the ground
- Use your foot to dig
- Jumping on shovels can result in injury
- Digging stops if someone reaches into the hole
- Swinging shovels or carrying them over your shoulder may hit someone

PLANTING DAY CHECK LIST

Before you start

- ❑ Make a list of the tools/materials you will need:

Shovels and rakes	Mulch
Watering cans	Buckets
Hoses and hose reels	Wheelbarrows
Gloves – ask volunteers to bring their own	Materials for tree protection

- ❑ Check water sources (i.e. taps have keys that work, hoses are long enough, etc.).
- ❑ Assign parent or community volunteers to help supervise. Orient volunteers and assign jobs.
- ❑ Provide handouts with planting day information:
  - Information about the project
  - Times and duties
  - Planting steps
  - List of plants and the planting plan.
- ❑ Advise participants to be prepared for the outdoors (i.e. hats, rain gear, outdoor shoes, clothes that can get dirty, sunscreen and water bottles).
- ❑ Get the site ready to plant:
  - Position your plant material or label the location where they should be planted.
  - Set up watering/tool distribution/snack stations.
  - Provide signage to describe your project, recognize your funders and direct volunteers.

Planting

- ❑ Review the plans for your greening project, the types of plants being planted, safety rules and the proper use of tools with all participants.
- ❑ Demonstrate each planting step – see PLANTING YOUR TREES handout.
- ❑ Organize students in groups of 3 or 4.

Take Photos

- ❑ A photo of your site before and after it's planted is a great way to create a 'wow' factor. Be sure to take the photograph from exactly the same angle.

Clean-up

- ❑ Involve students in the clean up of the site.
- ❑ Make sure there are adequate facilities for everyone to wash up.

After the planting

- ❑ Make an announcement in the school to celebrate the hard work of the students and volunteers.
- ❑ Place an ad in the community paper or school newsletter thanking your volunteers and donors.

Source: Evergreen and Blackburn Elementary School Planting Project