

Tree for life!

- A Guide to a Tree Planting Event

Maire Turunen



Image: Environment Online ENO archives

Table of contents



Intro: Get inspired!

1. Preparations before

- 1.1 Schedule
- 1.2 What trees to plant?
- 1.3 Where to plant?
 - 1.3.1 About soil types
- 1.4 Tools
- 1.5 Plan education
- 1.6 Collaborate locally
- 1.7 Involve community
- 1.8 Local media

2. Your Tree Planting Day

3. Afterwards

- 3.1 Planting was just a start
- 3.2 Organize a tree taking care event together with students
- 3.3 Share and spread the message!

4. Additional materials

- 4.1 How to make a speech – a guide for students
- 4.2 Our Tree Planting Day! – A video challenge for schools
- 4.3 Letter to the Future: Writing a Letter to a Tree

Get inspired!

Tree planting event is a special moment

Where can we find inspiration? Inspiration can be drawn from both old and new mythological stories or poems that highlight the deeper cultural meanings and symbolism of trees and forests. Each country and culture surely has its own traditions. For example, the Finnish national epic, *Kalevala*, and its recent reinterpretations, such as *Finnish National Epic Kalevala with New Eyes* (ed. Salla Simukka and Siri Kolu), offer excellent sources of inspiration. Different kinds of tree- and forest-related art can also serve as valuable inspiration. Check for example these painters:

- Caspar David Friedrich – forests and solitary trees symbolize spirituality, mortality, and the sublime
- Vincent van Gogh – expressive trees (like cypresses) reflect emotion and inner turmoil
- Gustav Klimt – decorative, symbolic trees (e.g. Tree of Life)
- Claude Monet – trees and seasonal change as perception and light studies
- Anselm Kiefer – forests tied to memory, history, and trauma
- Giuseppe Penone – explores growth, time, and human connection to trees
- Olafur Eliasson – nature, perception, and environmental awareness
- Agnes Denes – ecological art and environmental symbolism
- Andy Goldsworthy – ephemeral works with leaves, branches, and natural cycles
- Ansel Adams – forests and wilderness as sacred, monumental landscapes
- Sebastião Salgado – documents forests and environmental restoration
- Maya Lin – works on memory, landscape, and ecological systems
- Akseli Gallen-Kallela – forests tied to mythology and identity (linked to *Kalevala*)
- Eija-Liisa Ahtila – explores human relationships with nature and forests
- Outi Pieski – nature, land, and cultural identity



Metsäkeskus



“The best time to plant a tree was twenty years ago.
The second best time is now.” — Traditional proverb

“He who plants a tree plants hope.” — Lucy Larcom

1. PREPARATIONS BEFORE

Tree planting event

STEP BY STEP



1.1 Schedule

Any day can be a tree planting day, but the season for planting trees varies depending on where you are located and the natural conditions. Great tree planting days include, for example:

- **21 Sep:** UN's International Day for Peace – "Plant a tree for peace"
- **22 May:** UN's Day for Biological Diversity – "Plant a tree for life"
- **12 March:** Tree planting Day in China

During these days, it is possible to receive support and encouragement from other tree planters, schools, and communities around the world by participating in global movements such as the 'Plant and Care for Peace' tree planting days, organized by Environment Online (ENO) together with the Plant and Care for Peace movement.

Read more: <https://www.enoprogramme.org/eno-tree-planting-days>



Tree planting event

STEP BY STEP



1.2. What trees to plant?

Find out your local tree species. Plant only trees that are typical for your climate and dominant tree species in your region! You could plant your apple seedlings sprouted, or perhaps a local native tree for wildlife. No matter what the species, make sure that it's not an invasive species.

[What are invasive species?](#)



Image: Environment Online ENO

Tree planting event

STEP BY STEP



1.3. Where to plant?

Choose suitable places for trees and dig holes in advance. When choosing your tree, ensure that the soil and place (shady/sunny) is suitable for it. Soil type is crucial for successful tree planting, as it directly impacts root development, nutrient availability, and overall tree health.

Note that trees need plenty of room to grow, so don't plant them near houses. Investigate if there are any special considerations about roots growth patterns before buying your plant. Find out also what kind of care the tree will require over short and long-term periods. See more tree care tips for example [here](#)

Tree planting event

STEP BY STEP



1.3.1 About soil types

Understanding your soil's characteristics is essential for selecting suitable tree species and implementing proper soil management practices. A simple method to identify soil type is the "texture by feel" technique:

Loam Soil: Loam is a good mixture of sand, silt, and clay, as well as organic matter. This is the soil type we all wish we had for gardening! Loams can have more sand or more silt or more clay, but they generally feel smooth between your fingers. A moistened ball of loam sticks together well but breaks apart readily when bounced or when you run the soil between your thumb and fingers.

Sandy Soil: Feels gritty and forms a loose ball that crumbles easily.

Clay Soil: Feels sticky and forms a firm ball that holds its shape.

Silty Soil: Feels smooth and silky, forming a ball that breaks apart with slight pressure.

Tree planting event

STEP BY STEP



Identify soil types

Read more about soil types and how to identify them [here](#)

Watch a video on
identifying soil types →



Link to the video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mru1ElmG7pg>

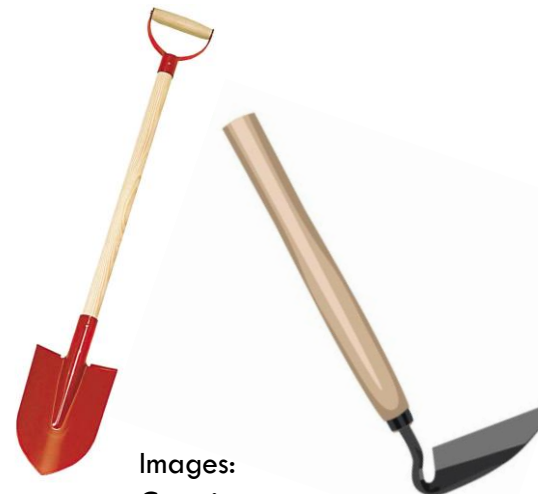
Tree planting event STEP BY STEP



Image:
Environment Online ENO archives

1.4. Tools

Usually tools needed for tree planting is a shovel or hoe for digging a hole. If you're planting a lot of small tree seedlings in a forest you might think of the Finnish planting tube invention "pottiputki"



Images:
Creative commons

**How to use a
planting tube?**



**Watch
a video!** <https://youtu.be/MOGDPITfDGs>

Tree planting event

STEP BY STEP



1.5 Plan education

A tree planting event is a great opportunity to provide forest and nature education in a natural setting. Here are some tips on the types of educational activities you can include in the event:



Tree planting event

STEP BY STEP



- 1. Why are trees important to us?** Have a discussion outside and get answers from students and explain.
- 2. Tree identification quiz:** Use parts of trees such as leaves, trunks, husks, or seedlings of typical trees to test students' knowledge. You can also print images of typical tree species. You can also create a tree and a forest knowledge quiz. Younger students might enjoy tree identification plays.
- 3. Soil type identification:** Identify the soil type together or in small groups. Make sure not to harm nature's surface too much. Think together: Is it ideal for the trees you're about to plant?
- 4. Dangers to tree seedlings:** Learn about the typical dangers in the area or region for tree seedlings. Test students' knowledge and explain. Explain also the caretaking of the tree seedlings afterwards.
- 5. Trees & animals:** Who calls this tree home? What animals especially like this tree or use it as shelter? Does anyone use it as a food source?
- 6. Trees & carbon:** How much carbon does this tree absorb during its lifetime? Get help from [here](#)
- 7. Tree growth and life cycle:** How tall is the tree after one year, five, ten or fifty years? When does the tree die?

Tree planting event STEP BY STEP



1.6 Collaborate locally!

Get in touch with local experts, such as forestry companies, lumberjacks, or landscape/park designers – they are often happy to help or promote/sponsor events. They can also be invited to the events to assist and share knowledge about trees and tree planting.



Image:
Environment Online ENO archives

Tree planting event

STEP BY STEP



1.7 Involve community – bring special guests!

Involve other local people from your community to take part. Tree planting initiatives bring people also together, foster the sense of belonging and collaboration within communities. By working side by side to plant trees, people also strengthen bonds, build trust, and cultivate a shared commitment to the well-being of their neighborhoods and beyond.

You can also invite other schools, members from other communities, special guests or your local celebrities to join this event, probably one of them could give a short speech?



Image:
Environment Online ENO archives

Tree planting event STEP BY STEP



1.8 Local media

A tree planting is always a special event. Should you involve local media? They could write an article about your event, helping to spread the awareness of the importance of trees and tree planting even more widely.



2. YOUR TREE PLANTING DAY

Tree planting event

STEP BY STEP



1. Go to your tree planting site and gather around the seedlings
2. Students plant trees together with adults (teachers, experts, local people, special guests...)
3. Play your program. It can include speeches*, education**, singing, dancing and plays. Tip: A very nice tree planting song with a play is "[Hi and ho – we plant trees](#)".

* See an example student speech at the end of this document.

** Use the tips provided earlier in section 1.5.

1. Arrange a group photo, where students, guests and audience gather around the tree seedlings.

Tree planting event STEP BY STEP



Your Tree
Planting event



- Is a special and a joyful event!

3. AFTERWARDS

Tree planting event

STEP BY STEP



3.1 Planting was just a start

You have to take care of your tree. Water it regularly. During the first couple growing seasons, your newly planted tree is expending a lot of energy trying to get its roots established in the soil. You can use mulch around your tree as it insulates the soil and helps to provide a buffer from heat and cold. It also keeps weeds out to avoid root competition.

Did you plant forest seedlings? Watch [this video](#) on how to take care of the forest seedlings in a sustainably. Consider if the content is appropriate in your country/area. You can have subtitles in different languages.



Tree planting event

STEP BY STEP



3.2 Organize a tree taking care event together with students

Go to the tree planting site and check how the seedlings have started to grow. Is there a lot of hay or other tree species invading the planted seedlings? Get space for your tree seedlings to grow by picking them away. Get experts with you advising the students and using right tools. Maybe in the student family there are also forest experts who can help?

Make also sure city/municipality responsible of green spaces are aware where the trees are planted!

Tree planting event

STEP BY STEP



3.3 Share and spread the message!

Share your tree planting journey with others Living Lab schools and/or locally and internationally. If your school or community took part in a tree-planting campaign, share it through the campaign platforms and social media using the recommended hashtags. Use your school's, community's, or organization's channels too.

Social media:

LinkedIn @eco2adapt

Instagram "Metsä muuttuvassa ilmastossa"

<https://www.instagram.com/metsamuuttuvassailmastossa>

HASTAGS:

#eco2adapt

If you're also participating in Plant and care for peace events pls use hastags:

#enoprogramme

#pacfpeace

4. ADDITIONAL MATERIAL

Tree planting event

STEP BY STEP



4.1 How to make a speech – a guide for students

1. What is your message for the day?

- How is your environment important to you? Think locally and globally.
- Tree planting is a concrete action. Is there some other important topics that are related to your tree planting action?
- Why is tree planting important?

2. With who are you planting?

- Speak about with who are you planting, where are you located and your local community.
- Explain the tree planting campaign, if your event takes part of those.

3. What is tree symbol for you?

- What are you honoring with your action?

4. Conclusion

- Summarize your speech with future wishes

Tree planting event STEP BY STEP



4.2 Our Tree Planting Day! - A video challenge for schools:

Create your own video about your school's tree planting event, showcasing your activities, speeches, and other programs. Edit it into a nice, complete video with music that you would like to present to other students around the world.

Length of the video: max. 4 minutes

Check [Padlet](#):



Hashtags: #eco2adapt

Some examples: [video 1](#) [video 2](#) [video 3](#)

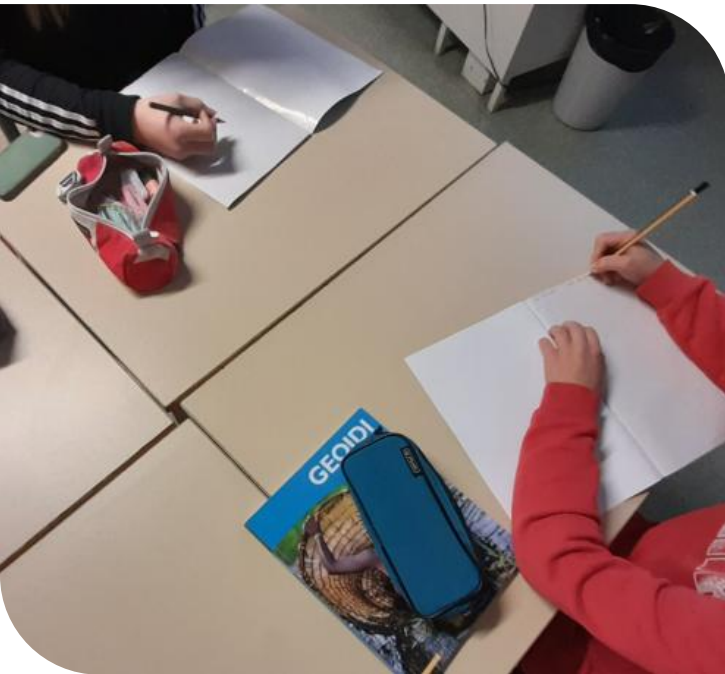


Tree planting event

STEP BY STEP



4.3 Letter to the Future: Writing a Letter to a Tree



Students can write a letter to the future, imagining a time when the tree is 10 or 15 years old. In the letter, they can mention how old they themselves will be then and think about where they might be. How big will the tree likely be, and what will its surroundings look like? What hopes do the students have for themselves, the sapling, and the environment?

The letter can be saved, and students can come back to visit the tree later. Did their thoughts and wishes turn out as planned? Alternatively, the writing and its wishes can be symbolically sprinkled into the ground beneath the sapling before planting, allowing the tree to carry the students' hopes as it grows.

