



national
tree day

PLANET ARK  TOYOTA

Councils
Getting Started Guide

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ALL ABOUT NATIONAL TREE DAY

What is National Tree Day?

National Tree Day and Schools Tree Day, proudly sponsored by Toyota, make up Australia's biggest community tree-planting and nature protection event. Founded in 1996, these days have become landmark events nation-wide. Each year hundreds of thousands of people plant around a million seedlings, and restore many thousands of hectares of unique Australian landscape to enable local native plants & animals to flourish

National Tree Day is a "call to action" to all Australians to get involved in volunteering to help protect and preserve their local environment. Many volunteers are encouraged by the fact that Tree Day is a national event. By joining together with the rest of the country, the volunteers are able to measure the significant environmental impact of all their combined efforts across Australia.

What is Schools Tree Day?

Each year, around 2500 Australian schools participate in a special National Tree Day event designed just for children – Schools Tree Day! Held the Friday prior to National Tree Day, it's a great opportunity to educate young people about why planting trees is vital to maintaining the world's ecosystems.

Why should your council get involved?

Throughout the years, councils have provided enormous support to National Tree Day with great success. Holding a Tree Day in your local area is an opportunity to protect your local environment while engaging with your local community.

National Tree Day benefits councils by:

- Encouraging a more unified community who

have a sense of ownership and custodianship of their local natural spaces.

- Raising the public profile of the Lord Mayor/ Mayor and the council through extensive local media coverage in print, online and broadcast media
- Encouraging local residents to volunteer their services to beautify their council area
- Helping to identify areas of environmental concern that need repair
- Improving the condition of local parks, gardens, catchment areas and habitat
- Generating positive publicity
- Educating the community about plants indigenous to the area, showing them what they should be planting in their backyard
- Helping to educate and inform Australians about environmental issues and encouraging them to take part in future nature protection programs

GETTING STARTED

Which Tree Day activities to choose

There are a number of different ways that councils can get involved in National Tree Day and Schools Tree Day activities. These include:

1. Hosting a community planting activity

Each year hundreds of councils across Australia take the opportunity to register and run a public site on National Tree Day, taking advantage of the marketing and publicity that Planet Ark creates around the event.

Many councils have expanded the scope of the event by incorporating fun environmentally



based activities for families such as food stalls, native animal shows, composting workshops, a BBQ and games. This makes the day more than just about planting natives, but about gaining an enriching experience by engaging with nature. Remember, National Tree Day can involve any kind of planting or restoration, not just tree planting.

If your preference is to have a community planting day but your local climatic conditions do not suit the timing of National Tree Day, Planet Ark has arranged volunteer insurance coverage all year round to enable public planting at a time that suits your environment and community.

2. Ongoing maintenance of previous planting sites

If your local climatic conditions do not suit planting around National Tree Day, you can consider hosting a day for volunteers to come and help maintain or regenerate existing natural sites in the local area. It can be helpful to tell the story of what you are trying to achieve at the site to engage the residents in your vision.

3. Native plant giveaway or weed swap

This can be done in conjunction with any of the above activities or as a stand alone National Tree Day activity. It is a great way to educate your local community on endemic native plants and what weeds look like. Registering your stand-alone activity on the National Tree Day website is a good way to promote it to local residents.

Councils also often support schools' involvement in Schools Tree Day. They can do this by:

- Providing local provenance plants
- Organising for staff and equipment to be made available to assist the schools with planting either on the school grounds or at a council site
- Engaging schools with other activities such as a Tree Trooper program (please see our Activity Guide tailored to your group for information on how to run this)

Whenever you hold your National Tree Day event you still need to **register** a public site or activity with us to be covered by our insurance and be part of the national tally. This can be done via our **website** at <http://treeday.planetark.org> or by calling the National Tree Day Hotline on **1300 88 5000**.

PLANNING YOUR NATIONAL TREE DAY PLANTING, REGENERATION OR MAINTENANCE ACTIVITY

Here is what you need to know get your Tree Day planting activity off the ground without a hitch!

1. Registering your site
2. Insurance details
3. How to organise your Tree Day site
4. What volunteers need to know
5. What you need on the day
6. Catering
7. On-site safety
8. Forms



Registering your site or activity

Don't forget to register your site!

It is necessary to register your site with Planet Ark so you can receive support materials for your Tree Day activity and for your volunteers to be insured. It also means that we can keep a record of your efforts and results to be included in state and national totals.

By registering your public site, you will also create your own site page on the Tree Day web site, including a map and RSVP facility. Your site will then be promoted via our online search and hotline number.

Go to the [National Tree Day website](#) or call the National Tree Day Hotline on **1300 885 000**.

Please note: If you register your event less than 10 days prior to the actual day, we will not be able to send support materials in time for your event.

Insurance details

Planet Ark has arranged public liability and volunteer insurance cover for all participants in public National Tree Day activity throughout the year.

For this cover to be effective, each participant (including the coordinator themselves) must sign a volunteer registration form and a copy of the completed form must be returned to Planet Ark. Registrations for children under 18 must be signed by the parent or guardian. If the council-run Tree Day activity is on school grounds a roll call is sufficient.

For more specific details about insurance for schools and non-schools, visit <http://treeday.planetark.org/coords/insurance.cfm>.

How to organise your Tree Day site

Who is the organiser?

Nominate a site coordinator and deputy to oversee preparation for the day, including a qualified first-

aider. Also think about how volunteers will be able to identify these people (e.g. wear a badge or hat).

Choosing a site

Decide on a date. If National Tree Day, or Schools Tree Day is not an ideal time to plant trees in your area, you could consider the option of (Your Town) Tree Day or (Your Region) Tree Day.

Consider capacity. If you expect your Tree Day event to draw plenty of people, make sure the site can accommodate them. It's a good idea to ask volunteers to RSVP so you can plan accordingly.

Think about what your site needs. How many native species and seedlings will you plant and where do you plan to grow them? What about getting seedlings to the site? Does the site need preparation such as weeding, digging holes or ripping the soil? How long will this take? Do you have access to a water source and hoses or buckets for watering? Do you have plenty of mulch and tree guards available? Do you have a site monitoring and maintenance schedule to foster long-term growth and survival? Remember, young plants will need watering until their roots get established (at least 8-12 weeks, or longer if it doesn't rain). You can register your site on additional National Tree Day dates for follow-up activities and ask volunteers if they can come back to help.

What volunteers need to know

Remember to tell your volunteers what they need to bring such as suitable clothing, gloves, sturdy footwear, sunscreen, hats, equipment, drinks, snacks etc.

Use detail and where possible a street directory reference when providing your site address. Indicate where volunteers should meet and where they can find you if they're late. Provide a mobile contact number in case of any emergencies and for possible media calls.

Ensure volunteers know where you want the seedlings planted and why – help them engage



with your project by letting them know what you are hoping to achieve at your site. Consider making a poster for the entrance to your site explaining your aims for the day and how the land has transformed since you have begun working on it.

Make sure you tell your volunteers what you'll supply for them. They should know that they could just turn up on the day and start planting, rain, hail or shine.

What you need on the day

Site coordinators need to make sure that they are well-prepared to supply volunteers with all the tools they need to get growing.

Remember to allocate someone to conduct planting demonstrations for volunteers. Show your volunteers how to plant trees, shrubs or grasses and make sure they are comfortable with this before you leave them to plant on their own. It is vital that you do this to help the plants survive. Planet Ark's poster "How to Plant a Tree" can be a useful resource to have at your site. This can be downloaded at <http://treeday.planetark.org/coords/posters-brochures.cfm>.

Essential tools

- Signage to help volunteers find your planting site
- Native trees, shrubs, groundcovers or grass seedlings
- Mulch - very important! Mulch helps to reduce competition from weeds and prevents loss of moisture from the soil.
- Trowels or small shovels, picks and mallets to drive in stakes (you can ask people to bring their own)
- Gardening gloves (you can ask people to bring their own)
- Wheelbarrows for transporting seedlings, equipment and mulch
- Stakes and tree guards or used milk cartons to protect seedlings

- Access to a water source (or take your own water to the site)
- Garden hoses, watering cans or buckets for watering
- Rubbish bins or bags to keep the site clean
- A first aid kit and qualified first-aider
- Card or picnic tables for the volunteer registration desk
- Sufficient 'Volunteer Registration Forms' and pens
- Copies of the 'Accident/Incident Report Form'
- Risk Assessment documentation
- 'Results Registration Form' to help Planet Ark count the number of trees planted and volunteers and report on other activities at your site (this can also be completed [online](#))

All forms and signage are available at <http://treeday.planetark.org/coords> or by calling 1300 885 000.

Catering

Lions Clubs are key supporters of Tree Day. Contact your local Lions club to ask if they can provide a BBQ at your site. If your local Lions club cannot assist you, other local service clubs may be able to help. Your local council should be able to provide you with contact details for Lions clubs or other service clubs in your area. Service clubs are often busy so make sure you give them as much notice as you can.

On-site Safety

Risk assessment

It's important to conduct a risk assessment of your site to minimise the chance of any accidents or incidents occurring. If your council does not have a standard procedure for this you can download our Risk Assessment Guidelines at <http://treeday.planetark.org/coords/coord-forms.cfm>.

First aid kit

Please ensure you have a first aid kit and designated (preferably qualified) first-aider at the event. In case



of an accident on the day, act responsibly. Please call an ambulance or doctor for serious accidents. Report any incident to the National Tree Day Hotline on **1300 88 5000**. You must also fill out an 'Accident/Incident Report Form' also available for download from <http://treeday.planetark.org/coords/coord-forms.cfm>

Accident/incident report form

Have copies of this form on hand in case you need to report an accident or incident to Planet Ark.

Forms

All forms can be downloaded from our [website](#)

Volunteer registration form

Get everyone at your site, including you, to fill in their details before planting so that they are covered by Planet Ark's Volunteer and Public Liability insurance. Note that school children do not need to be listed here if they already appear on a class roll (no need to send these in!)

Photo release form

So that you can share your Tree Day photos with the world! You can upload photos to our [Tree Day facebook page](#), #nationaltreeday on twitter or instagram, or email them to treeday@planetark.org

Results form

Make your efforts count and let us know your results from the day! You can also enter your results online by logging in at <http://treeday.planetark.org/coords> or over the phone by calling the Tree Day Hotline on **1300 88 5000**.

Remember, National Tree Day isn't just about planting trees. It's also about people contributing to their community and of course having fun! Consider putting together some simple activities for families and children to make it an event to remember. You can find templates for some of these activities at <http://treeday.planetark.org/councils/other-activities.cfm>. Other ideas include:

- Native plant giveaways
- Weed swap
- Environmental treasure hunts
- Craft your own sustainable artwork
- Scavenger hunts
- Tree guard decorating competition

There are a whole bevy of activities that you could set up at your Tree Day site. Use your imagination! Most activities aren't too hard to organise and they offer incentive for volunteers to participate in your event. For more ideas check out our Activity Guide tailored to your group.

PROMOTING THE DAY WITHIN YOUR COMMUNITY

Community

- **Register your site:** Register your site at the National Tree Day website <http://treeday.planetark.org>. When people visit our website or phone our hotline at **1300 88 5000**, they will be able to find details of their local event. Include as many details as possible on your registration form. People want to hear about what you're trying to achieve with your project so they can see the bigger picture. This will ensure that plenty of keen volunteers turn up at your site.
- **Approach relevant local groups:** Talk to any local groups that may have an interest in supporting the event or registering their own National Tree Day site such as sporting or outdoors clubs, adventure clubs, gardening groups, church groups, universities, multicultural organisations, service clubs like Lions or Rotary etc. You may want to contact



some community event organisers if you're planning to hold other festivities alongside the planting.

- **National Tree Day website:** Include the National Tree Day website and hotline on the council website, newsletters, event calendars and any other relevant communications.
- **Letterbox drop:** a letterbox drop in the local area around the planting site can be very effective. Download a template at <http://treeday.planetark.org/coords/posters-brochures.cfm>
- **Adapt the resources:** Use the adaptable posters on the National Tree Day website and insert your event details. Print them and post them around your local area, including bus shelters, telegraph poles, council bus backs, council chambers, community calendars, community centres and halls.
- **Inform residents about your competitions:** Competitions are a great launching pad to get people to take some interest in the event. Advertise any competitions that Planet Ark is running through your website, staff communications or newsletters and also consider running your own competition. Consider using the Tree Day activity or colouring templates as part of the competition (these can be found at <http://treeday.planetark.org/kids/fun.cfm>). Think about your main target audience, and propose a prize that is particularly inviting to them. This can also offer an avenue for a local business to become involved by donating a prize. Make sure you check the permit and competition requirements in your state before advertising your competition.

Schools

- **Encourage schools to register a site:** Schools Tree Day runs on the Friday before National Tree Day with over 200,000 school students participating across the country. Some teachers are unsure of how to set up a Tree Day event; councils can offer them a

helping hand to get started or run the event for them. Alternatively you can direct them to the National Tree Day website <http://treeday.planetark.org>, or give them the contact details of the local Landcare group to guide them.

- **Reward the outstanding:** Arrange for the Lord Mayor/Mayor to make an appearance at a school doing great things on Schools Tree Day. The school could be presented with an award from the council for their outstanding efforts in revitalising their gardens. This would generate local media for both the council and the school.
- **Explore beyond the school grounds:** Some schools do not have any space to plant. They should not be discouraged! Invite schools to hold an excursion to a site in the council area so that students don't miss out.
- **Promote online:** Include any details of Schools Tree Day events on the council website, event calendars and in any external and internal communications. Request that schools that have a website or newsletter promote the council event to parents as they may have an interest in attending the event with their family or supporting it financially.

Businesses

- **Partner with our major sponsor, Toyota:** Each year Toyota Dealers donate a wide range of resources to public and school sites across Australia. Contact your local Toyota Dealer to see if they are able to donate tree guards and stakes, gloves and Tree Day t-shirts for your volunteers and staff. If you need assistance, contact the National Tree Day Hotline on **1300 88 5000**.

* **Please note: not all Toyota dealers participate in National Tree Day**
- **Inform local businesses about the event:** Approach businesses in your area and give them details about your Tree Day site. Church groups also often have a particular interest in these kinds of initiatives and may have sites that are appropriate for rejuvenation. If they are unable to attend the site you've chosen,



encourage them to do some planting in the gardens around their workplace.

- **Promote within a business:** Negotiate some space within a company, café or restaurant where posters advertising the site can be placed. Most cafes and restaurants are receptive to this even if they can't get involved in an event.
- **Promote online:** Send out a brief media release or email alert to local businesses telling them about the event and asking if they can disseminate details through internal communication networks, external newsletters or on their website. For an adaptable media release, please visit <http://treeday.planetark.org/media/>.
- **Be open to collaboration:** Some businesses may be interested in making the Tree Day event a collaborative effort. It can be good publicity for them while also providing councils with more hands and heads determined to make the event a success.

STORIES TO INSPIRE YOU

George Kendall Riverside Bushcare; supported by Parramatta City Council – George Kendall Riverside Park

Sitting alongside the Parramatta River at Ermington lies the George Kendall Riverside Park where over 16 000 native plants have been planted in the last 4 years. With the help of Parramatta City Council and local citizens, George Kendall Riverside Bushcare group has transformed their local park into an area nurtured and appreciated by the community.

Each year, hundreds of Parramatta residents gather on National Tree Day to plant more indigenous plants and encourage the introduction of new wildlife. The day is now a major event, including everything from jumping castles to indigenous ceremonies to sporting events. The Riverside Park has become a pleasant resting spot for both animals and humans, where both co-exist in harmony. Where once there were weeds, there are now wattles, hophbush, dianellas, wandering postman, sarsparilla, and kangaroo grass, all growing strongly. Masses of mauves, yellows, reds, and white flowers also blossom in the springtime, while quails, finches and butterflies roam the park grounds.

The Bushcare group along with council undergoes maintenance of the Riverside Park throughout the year, using National Tree Day as a launching pad for an ongoing interest in the protection of the local environment. They are currently making plans to revitalize other areas in need of care. Their success has inspired the group to repair declared threatened ecological plant communities in their local parks. Saltmarsh work a little further upstream at Pemberton Street Reserve (Baludari Wetlands) has resulted in hundreds of fish and fry thriving in a once heavily polluted area. Their continued efforts to improve the state of the Parramatta River and the surrounding parks has given birth to growth of a wide variety of plant species and the return of indigenous wildlife.



Yarra City Council

"The sense of community in such a highly urbanised area as Melbourne is low so these days in particular offer a rare opportunity to meet and work with neighbours."

- Craig McGrath, Yarra City Council

The culturally and socially diverse inner city of Yarra exemplifies how city life need not be bare of trees. Located in the inner eastern and northern suburbs of Melbourne, Yarra City Council and its residents have a commitment to environmental causes. The Council oversees 120 parks and gardens and holds regular community planting days throughout the year. The Council has also been responsible for revegetating many areas along the Yarra River in need of repair.

Working with several community groups, such as the Friends of Merri Creek, the Friends of Quarries Park and the Growing Friends of Yarra Bend, the Council has helped bring its urban community together in a united cause. Each year, they encourage schools in the area to hold their own Tree Day event and assist them in their planting activities by providing much needed funds and provisions.

The Council has also made significant contributions to the Merri Parklands, an area that now houses a variety of native plants and animals. In collaboration with the Merri Creek Management Committee, they have contributed to the achievement of a 10 year plan aimed at creating park reserves for the urban city of Melbourne. They hope to enrich metropolitan areas, making it a more hospitable environment for both the Australian people and native wildlife. Now many bird species and rare and endangered reptile and amphibians have a new place to call home.

The Yarra City Council extends its Tree Day activities by making them cultural as well as environmental events. In 2007, a member of the Werundjeri Tribal Counsellors and Consultants was present to carry out cultural awareness activities which included boomerang workshops.

For National Tree Day in 2009, over 200 volunteers were present to plant over 4000 native trees, shrubs, grasses and groundcover. Yarra City Council ensures that the day involves plenty of family activities, offering face-painting and providing a mobile zoo so that residents nurture a greater understanding of native Australian wildlife. Educational activities, environmental walks and even skateboarding workshops have been a part of their National Tree Day activities, making their events attractive to all walks of life.

NATIONAL TREE DAY CONTACT DETAILS

National Tree Day Hotline: 1300 88 5000

National Tree Day Website:
<http://treeday.planetark.org>

Contact Email: treeday@planetark.org

Mailing Address: Level 3, 15-17 Young St, Sydney NSW 2000

Facebook Page:
www.facebook.com/NationalTreeDay



RESOURCES PROVIDED BY PLANET ARK FOR COUNCILS

1. Council National Tree Day “Getting Started” Guide
2. Council National Tree Day Activity Guide
3. Signage
4. Adaptable Media Release
5. Adaptable A3 Poster
6. General A3 Poster
7. Adaptable A5 Flyer
8. How to Plant a Tree Poster
9. How to Plant a Tree Video with Ranger Stacey
10. Volunteer Registration Form
11. Photo Release Form
12. Accident/Incident Form
13. Results Form
14. Activity and Colouring Sheets

