

# A TEACHERS' GUIDE TO **ARBOR** MONTH



**Activities on Trees and the  
Natural World for Grades K–8**



**Minnesota Arbor  
Month Partnership**

Revised 2002





# Introduction



## Dear Teacher,

Arbor Day is the last Friday in April each year in Minnesota. Arbor Month is May. Both offer wonderful learning opportunities for your students during Arbor celebrations and throughout the school year.

A *Teachers' Guide to Arbor Month* makes it easier than ever to integrate knowledge about trees, shrubs, plants, and the natural world into your regular school curriculum. This cross-curricular thematic guide offers dozens of student-appealing lessons to supplement your daily lessons in: language arts, people and cultures, science and the environment, math, the arts, games and physical activities. It is an ideal enhancement to your environmental education program, and can help you meet Minnesota graduation standards.

You'll want to page through the subject areas, choosing activities that are appropriate for your group. Grade levels are suggested, but you are encouraged to check out the other grade materials, too, and adapt any activities to fit your group. Many of the activities include ready-to-reproduce student pages. You'll recognize them by the "Kid's Copy" design at the top right corner of the page.

Take a look through the Resources section. It's a valuable collection of reference material on many topics about trees. Most of these pages are also designed as ready-to-reproduce resources for your students and are ideally suited for independent learning projects in the upper elementary and junior high grades.

If you're using literature-based units with your students, be sure to look through the Books and More section.

Keep your *Teachers' Guide to Arbor Month* handy throughout the school year. It's a great reference for tree information any time, and offers a treasury of learning opportunities that integrate into your curriculum any time of the year.

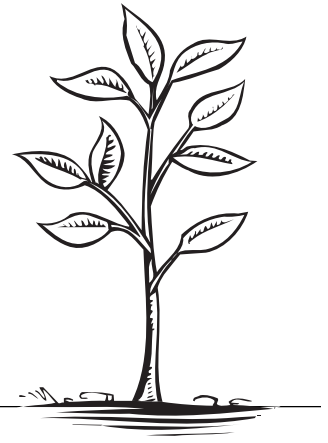
This *Teachers' Guide to Arbor Month* has been especially prepared for you by the Minnesota Arbor Month Partnership in collaboration with Minnesota teachers. Please feel free to reproduce any of these materials and share them with others.

**Happy Arbor Day!**



## Setting the Stage

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### Trees: A Cross-Curricular Thematic Unit

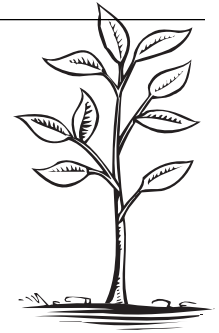
1. Develop a reading corner, a quiet place for treasuring books. Make it an inviting, enjoyable nook by including carpeting, pillows, rugs, comfortable chairs, and a bookshelf. Stock your reading corner with many fiction and nonfiction books about trees, forests, and related topics. Invite students to share their own favorite tree books, too.
2. Create a science station and an art gallery for displaying tree- and forest-related items.
3. Provide computer access and website addresses to a number of tree and environmental sites. Create opportunities for students to share what they discover in their Internet searches.
4. Invite students to create tree bulletin boards, posters, models, and murals to go with the lessons in these units.
5. Contact your local community, county extension, or Department of Natural Resources forester for tree seeds, seedlings, and saplings. Grow tree seedlings in the classroom and saplings on the school grounds. If possible, send a seedling home with each child to plant along with the tree planting instructions found on page 119 in the Resources section of this guide.



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As you launch into the exciting activities in this book, you're doing so with the support and encouragement of the Minnesota Arbor Month Partnership. The agencies, organizations, and individuals comprising the partnership are deeply committed to building understanding and respect for Minnesota's trees and forest resources. Their mission is to educate Minnesota's youth and build public awareness about the importance of trees, community forestry, and the environment by getting children and adults involved with planning for, planting, and maintaining trees.

Contact the Minnesota Arbor Month Partnership at 500 Lafayette Road, St. Paul, Minnesota 55155-4044; 651-296-4491; <http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/forestry/arborday>





# Arbor Day



## Celebrate Trees!

### Objectives

- To motivate young people to value, conserve, and plant trees for a better environment.
- To provide a plan for conducting Arbor Day/Month ceremonies or tree-planting campaigns.

Tree planting is what a Minnesota Arbor Celebration is all about. Just one tree planted on Arbor Day does more than shade the spot where it's planted. It gives root to the love of trees and the stewardship of renewable resources.

This *Teachers' Guide to Arbor Month* is a collection of activities, bulletin board ideas, tips, facts, and reproducible pages designed to make your observance an exciting and meaningful tradition ... and to help young people become tree-conscious all year long. Through Arbor Day celebrations and teaching students about trees, you help them plant the future for themselves and for generations of Minnesotans to come!

### Arbor Day

To everyone concerned with protecting and conserving tree resources, Arbor Day is a day to celebrate! It's a special day when people learn about, plant, and care for trees. *Minnesotans celebrate Arbor Day the last Friday in April*, along with most other states in the region. Since 1978, May has been Arbor Month in Minnesota. The ground has thawed by May to allow planting and the weather is warm

enough to get young trees off to a good start.

Arbor Day is an American tradition. Arbor celebrations began in Nebraska in 1872. Nebraska, along with other Great Plains states, had almost no trees. Still, the region grew flourishing agricultural crops and the climate was suitable for growing trees. A man named J. Sterling Morton believed the state needed more trees. He sponsored a campaign for tree planting in Nebraska, setting aside April 10 for just that purpose. The idea spread. In 1876, Minnesota became the fourth state to adopt the tradition. Today all 50 states observe Arbor Day on various dates, and all plant trees on their Arbor Days.

The following information will help you plan your Arbor Day/Month celebrations. Keep a good thing growing!

### Arbor Day Ceremony

Page 2 offers a framework of events you can adapt to fit your school or community. Your ceremony should include the reading of an Arbor Celebration proclamation and the planting of one or more trees. It can be much more, however. Singing, reading poems, entertainment by musicians and other performers, and refreshments all lend a festive air to your program and encourage widespread participation.

Your city forester, county extension people, Department of Natural Resources forestry personnel, greenhouse and landscape business owners, and other local environment-related people may be great resources and collaborators in the event. Check out your community resources!



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Here is a typical order of events for an Arbor Ceremony:

1. **Welcome** by mayor or other local dignitary.
2. **Brief history of Arbor Month** read by the program coordinator, a student, or a business leader. (Use the “Arbor Day” paragraphs from the previous page or choose a summary from a library book or encyclopedia.)
3. **Reading and signing of Arbor Day/ Month Proclamation** by mayor or other local dignitary.
4. **Music, poems, or selected readings.** Have students write or choose some. See “Tree Poems” and “Tree Tunes,” Resources, pages 130 and 131.
5. **Ceremonial tree planting.**
6. **Refreshments** and other entertainment.
7. Many classes follow up (or precede) their ceremonies with special classroom activities such as how to plant a tree (see Resources, page 119).

#### Details to Remember

1. Foul weather contingency plans.
2. Make arrangements. Schedule a public address system, tents, portable lavatories, trash cans, chairs, or other items you think you’ll need as soon as possible.
3. Invite everyone! Don’t forget parents, school volunteers, community leaders, senior citizen and civic groups, local business people, and city public works and parks people.
4. Media coverage. Announce your event everywhere you can. Invite the media four to six weeks ahead of the event. Follow with a brief press release one to two weeks ahead of the event describing what will happen, who will be participating, and why the event is important. Include the date and specific time schedule, along with helpful directions, parking information, etc. Give a contact number for more information. Provide write-ups summarizing the event for the media at the ceremony. Be available for questions.

5. Plan a creative or unique photo opportunity for television or newspaper photographers.
5. Printed programs. They hold events together.
6. Prepared-in-advance planting sites. Dig the holes in advance and provide mulch for each tree. Order appropriate tree species for your site. Make sure you have permission or the proper authorization to plant on the site.
7. Rehearse the details. A “dry run” the day before the ceremony helps you relax. Be sure projectors, public address systems, and other equipment aids are working perfectly. Post signs and appoint guides to help visitors.
8. Shovels. Have enough shovels for dignitaries ... and remind them to wear sturdy shoes!
9. Refreshments. April and May are often cool; you may want to move indoors after the planting for hot drinks and the program.
10. Follow-up tree care. Make sure someone comes back after the ceremony to water the tree(s) on a regular basis. Arrange to have one person or a group of people provide continued regular tree care.

