



Celebrate Arbor Day

Plant a tree and celebrate Arbor Day! The first official Arbor Day celebration took place in Nebraska around 1872. The idea came about when J. Sterling Morton felt the need to promote planting more trees in the vast prairie areas. Today, most states set their own Arbor Day celebrations in accordance to when it is the best time to plant trees in their state. What



Photo courtesy of: Trees Forever

date will your state celebrate Arbor Day?

Tree Talk

Trees come in all different shapes, sizes and colors, but most have the same basic parts.

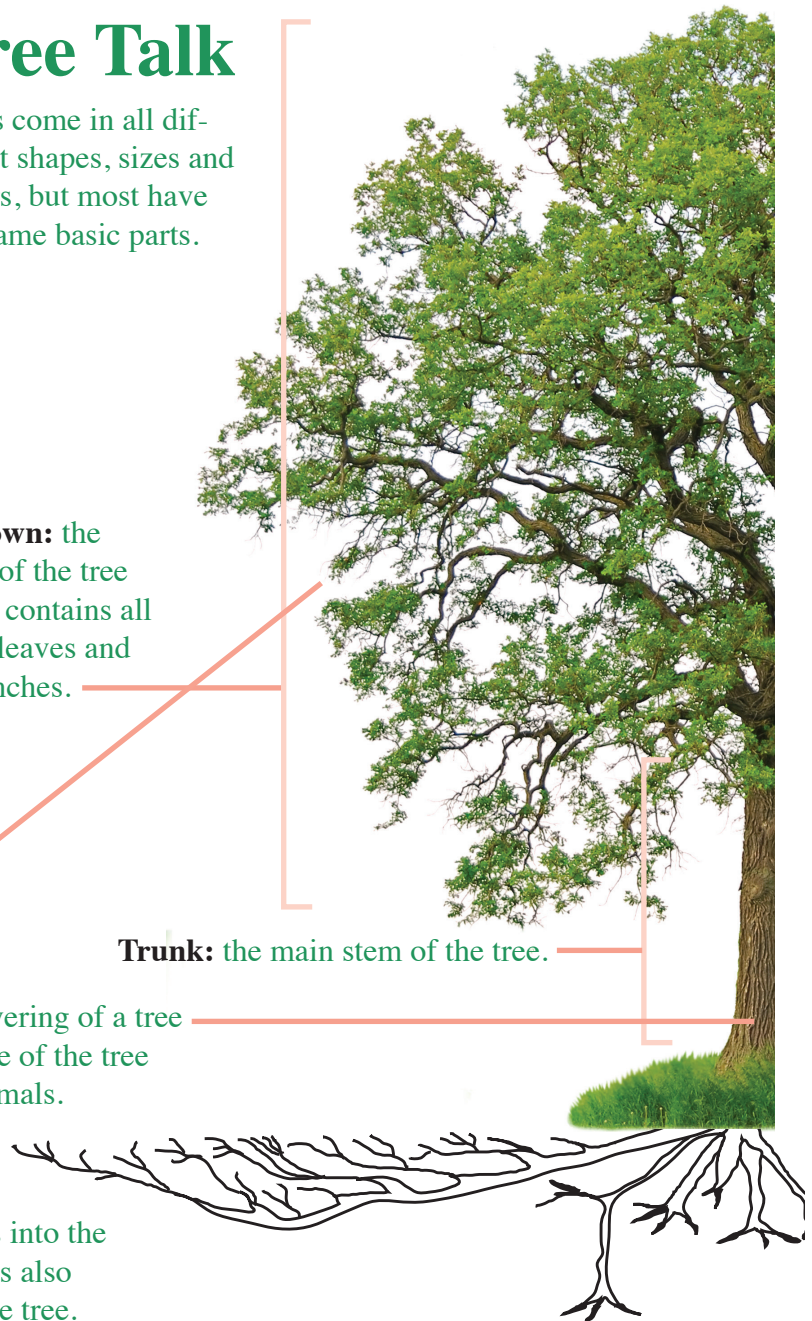
Crown: the top of the tree that contains all the leaves and branches.

Trunk: the main stem of the tree.

Bark: the outside covering of a tree that protects the inside of the tree from weather and animals.

Leaf: the growth from the stems where photosynthesis takes place and where nutrients can be stored.

Roots: the tree structure that grows into the soil and helps anchor the tree. Roots also supply the nutrients and water to the tree.



Important Dates in Environmental History

Preserving our environment and caring for all living things that inhabit the Earth began early in our country's history and continues today. Check out some of these important dates that have helped make our world a better place.

1872 - Yellowstone became the nation's first national park.



1881 - President authorizes public lands be set aside as forest reserves.

1897 - The National Forest System was established, followed by the United States Forest Service in 1905.



1970 - The first Earth Day was celebrated.

1974 - The Safe Drinking Water Act was passed and required the Environmental Protection Agency to regulate the quality of public drinking water.



1990 - The National Environmental Education Act was passed. It was created to educate the public about environmental decisions.

2003 - The Clean School Bus USA program updated over 4,000 school buses to eliminate pollutants from being released into the air.

2005 - National NeighborWoods month was created to celebrate organizations that participate in local tree planting programs.



2006 - WaterSense is launched to raise awareness about the importance of water efficiency.

Do the Research!

Above are the dates when important environmental actions were taken. For each date, determine who the President was at the time. Which President do you think made the most difference for our environment?

Benefits of Shade Trees

- Reduces carbon dioxide.
- Increases the value of land.
- Helps lower energy costs in your home.
- Improves appearance of property.
- Improves air quality.



What Do You Call Me?

Trees fall into two categories, deciduous and coniferous. How do you tell them apart? Simply remember this: deciduous trees, like the Oak tree, lose their leaves once a year. Coniferous trees have cones and needles instead of leaves.





How Do I Plant My New Tree?

One of the biggest mistakes made when planting a tree is that the tree is planted too deep. To avoid making mistakes when planting your next tree, follow these simple steps:

1. First, make sure you did your research and plant a tree that is native to your state. Why do you think this is important?
2. Select an area that is going to allow your new tree to have enough room to grow to its full size. Try to avoid being too close to buildings or power lines.
3. With the help of an adult, dig a hole that is as deep as your tree's roots are long. The hole should also be at least three times wider than the soil and material around the roots of your new tree.
4. Lightly water your tree hole to help the soil and air settle out of the way of your new tree's roots.
5. Place your tree into the new hole, placing the root collar (the place where the roots join the stem) at soil level. Now begin to fill the hole back in with the dirt you just removed. As you're filling the hole back in, make sure someone is holding the tree straight.
6. Now have an adult add stakes around your tree to help keep it straight as it grows. This will also protect your tree from wind damage.



Photos courtesy of:
Iowa State University, NREM

Rooted in Clean Water

Trees, shrubs and prairie grasses help clean the water you drink. Farmers are concerned about water quality so they plant areas called riparian buffer strips. Riparian means along a stream or river. Buffers are used to separate things. For example, if a large factory is built next door to your house, you would want to put in a buffer of trees to separate your house from the factory. Not only does it block the view, it also provides a sound barrier, and attracts wildlife to your yard.

Riparian buffer strips use trees, shrubs (bushes), and prairie grasses to separate the land from the water. Farmers plant riparian buffers to reduce soil erosion, provide wildlife habitats and to improve water quality by filtering out chemicals and nutrients from the surface run-off water.

Run-off occurs when it rains. Some of the water is absorbed into the ground to replenish the groundwater that we use for drinking, but oftentimes, water runs off the surface of the land, such as the buildings and pavement.



Be Green and Recycle!



Does your family recycle? Did you know that you can recycle several products that are made from trees? Recycling can be as simple as having a paper recycling container in your classroom and putting your scrap paper in it. Christmas trees can also be recycled. Once the holiday season is over take your tree to a local recycling facility.

How are trees recycled? Trees can be pushed through chipping machines that can make mulch to use in landscaping. Recycled trees can be placed along rivers and ponds to slow soil erosion. Recycled trees can also help serve as new habitat for many animals, especially fish. Fuel can even be made from recycled wood chips!

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