



Schools Big Backyard Project

February to August 2012



Project Outline and Application Form

Overview

Teachers working with classes in the western suburbs are invited to apply to participate in Trees For Life's *Schools Big Backyard Project*. The project offers the opportunity for students to propagate their own native seedlings from seed, and care and maintain them until ready for planting out at the completion of the project, with assistance and expert guidance from Trees For Life staff. We have funding to offer the program to two school groups thanks to a small grant from the Bendigo Community Enterprise Foundation and West Beach & Districts Community Bank Branch and the Minter Ellison Foundation. Trees For Life has a strong interest in supporting teachers who have developed vibrant environmental programs for their students and who will use this project as the basis to build their students' understanding of biodiversity and the local environment. To be successful the school must be ready to commence the project in early February.



Project details

Trees For Life will work with one teacher and a single class at each school:

Visit One – Propagation Day - a half day in the first or second week of February:

Following a session on seed identification and the fundamentals of revegetation students will learn how to prepare planting tubes and seeds to propagate 300 native plants for planting out in early spring in their school or local area. All materials and a propagation book for each student will be provided.

Teacher-student follow up:

Establish a student watering roster. Water and tend plants daily. Design curriculum activities to maintain interest in the plantings eg monitor and measuring germination.

Visit Two – Monitoring & Maintaining - one hour in early April:

During this visit we will show the students how to manage the tubestock to maturity by learning about weed control, thinning and grading techniques and give them a chance to practice doing it themselves.

Teacher-student follow up:

Continue to thin and transplant as required; daily watering and monitoring; preparations for care over school holidays; discussions with your school or local council about possible planting sites.

Visit Three – Plant Identification - one hour in early June:

Trees For Life will visit the students to discuss the species they have grown and their role in a balanced ecosystem

Teacher-student follow up:

Continue care and maximise learning experiences. Set planting day date and advise TFL

Visit Four – Planning & Preparation - one hour in early July:

We will meet with the teacher to discuss the arrangement they have made for the planting site, visit the site to identify any issues, finalise arrangements for the planting.

Teacher-student follow up:

Continue care and maximise learning experiences

Visit Five – Planting Day - half day in August:

We will be on hand to assist the students with the planting and instruct them on the correct methods. We will assist with equipment if it is required

Teacher-student follow up:

Water the plants from time to time over summer to help them get through their first year.



Criteria

In order to complete the project successfully, you will need to ensure that your school is able to meet the following requirements.

PROPAGATION SET UP REQUIREMENTS

1. A Suitable Growing Area/Nursery

- Should receive 8 hours of direct sunlight (please be aware that sunlight will vary from February to August)
- Should be a secure area (away from vandals, accidents & thieves), however the area should still be accessible to students on a daily basis
- Should have easy access to water
- Protected from prevailing winds
- Good ventilation

2. A Growing Bench to keep your growing boxes on.

- waist height, to protect from weeds, pests & soil contamination
- should have good air flow & drainage
- be large enough to host growing boxes plus include extra working space

3. A Foolproof Watering Regime/System

- An automated watering system may be used if watering restrictions allow, but should not be relied upon for the entire program as the seedlings need to be continually monitored for problems & pests. Reliance on an automatic system also removes student responsibility and interaction opportunities
- Student roster systems work well
- A sound strategy must be in place to water on weekends and during school holidays

SCHOOL COMMITMENT REQUIREMENTS

1. Become a member of Trees For Life (\$75)

2. Monitor and water seedlings daily

- The seedlings need to be watered twice daily during germination (4 – 6 weeks) and then once daily for the remainder of the project
- Participating students should work on a rotating roster system
- Suitable arrangements must be made over weekends and school holidays to adequately care for the seedlings
- Any problems or difficulty growing/germinating you must contact your TFL Coordinator ASAP

3. Appoint a Project Coordinator

- This member of staff must coordinate and implement the entire program to ensure the success of the project (with support from the TFL Project Officer).
- Must oversee watering and plant care is administered correctly
- Must liaise with the TFL Project Officer regularly to arrange school visits, meet project timelines etc
- Ideally, this member of staff is also responsible for the Student Focus Group

4. Nominate a Student Focus Group

- The program is suitable for students in Year 5 and above
- You will be required to select one class, or a smaller focus group (group of 10 is ideal) to be in charge of the project.
- Ideally their class teacher will be the Project Coordinator. This way numerous extension activities can be included in the project during class times.

5. Select a Planting Site

- It is the schools responsibility to organize a suitable location to plant the seedlings. This may be on school property or local council land. The school must coordinate with the landholder directly to gain permission and discuss the land preparation required prior to planting.

What financial costs will the school need to provide?

Trees for life will supply seed and propagation materials and can provide tools and safety equipment. However there may be some financial costs incurred by the school in order to meet the needs of the project. These may include:

- setting up a nursery, growing bench & watering system
- preparing the site ready for planting, eg weed or grass removal, developing garden beds, purchasing mulch (only if you are planning to plant in your own school yard).





**Application Form
Schools Big Backyard Project**

School name:

School address:

Contact phone number: Fax:

Principal's name:

Name of person making the application:

Position title:

Contact phone: Mobile:

Email:

Number of students you will involve in the project:

Age of students: Year level:

Person who will coordinate the project:

Position title:

Please tell us what you already do in your school to promote environmental education.

How will this project benefit your students and support you as a teacher?

Please tell us how you plan to implement the project.

How will you extend the project into other areas of the curriculum?

Describe the growing area you intend to use – eg. aspect, hours of sunlight, protection.

How will you manage the care of the plants during hot weekends and school holidays?

Do you already have a planting site in mind? If so, tell us about where it is and who owns it.

Why do you want to be part of this project?

It is important that the person making this application will be directly involved in the project through to the end. The *Schools Big Backyard Project* requires a daily commitment for 6 months. I confirm that I can meet all the criteria for this project and will commit to its success if chosen to participate.

Applicant signature: Date:

Please return your applications by email to info@treesforlife.org.au no later than Wednesday 14 December putting Schools Big Backyard in the subject box. Feel free to extend the text boxes if you need more space. Thanks for your interest. We look forward to your application with enthusiasm.

All applicants will be notified of the outcome on or before Friday 16 December.