

# Establishing A School Arboretum or Tree Walk

At your school site, you will need to identify a minimum of 20 trees or woody shrubs that can be used by your students for the experiments in this Urban Forestry Unit. If there is not enough woody plant material available at your site, then a tree walk of the neighborhood could be designed.

## **Identifying all trees and shrubs on the premises**

1. All students will use the tree identification key ( May Watts Tree Finder from the Forester's Trunk) to identify a specific number of plants determined by the teacher.
2. A set of labeled tree and leaf parts on laminated tag board should be used to brief students on the plant part names they would experience in the field.
3. Make a map of the grounds with all the trees marked and numbered. The trees should be labeled with matching numbered tags to assure that the students are using the correct trees for their experiments.
4. Once all the trees on your site are identified and verified, a special identification key just for your site could be developed.
5. Make an inventory of all the woody species on the school grounds, for use in a data base at a later date.

## **Developing a School Arboretum**

1. The school administration must agree to furnish an area on the grounds that can be developed into an arboretum.
2. New trees should be added each year. Donations from local arboreta or nurseries are often possible.
3. The arboretum can serve as a community resource. Develop contacts in the community to work towards this goal.
4. Identify areas near the school that could be used for forestry activities in future years (fields, empty lots, community parks, cemeteries, churches, nurseries). Private firms or utility right-of-ways can also be used.

If your school site is not suitable for establishing an arboretum, there maybe a public park nearby that can be used. Or you could develop a neighborhood tree walk.

## **Use of Park Facilities**

1. Identify specific areas to be used.
2. Develop a list of short and long term benefits for the trees as a result of using the area.
3. Request permission for using the area.

4. Follow the same procedure as in the Identifying all trees and shrubs on the premises section.

Working with your city forester or park district to increase the number of species growing in the park is a valuable school exercise.

1. Activities your class could participate in:
  - a. Arbor Day activities
  - b. School/community activities on the site
  - c. Earth Day planting or clean-up activities
  - d. Others
2. Send students to local community groups to explain the project and what they hope to achieve with planting trees. The use of poetry or Bible passages can be a way to encourage people.
3. Develop a list of trees suitable for the site to be planted.

## **Tree Walk**

1. Map out a walk that students can take within an allotted school period. (15 to 25 trees are needed)
2. Check whether the trees are in the parkway or the front lawns.
  - a. Check with the city forester before using parkway trees.
  - b. Approach home owners to explain what the students will be doing, and how it will be part of the school's curriculum.
  - c. Develop an inventory of the trees with their site and address. The trees along the walk will involve the same experiments, so advance planning is very important.
3. Follow school rules governing students off campus.
  - a. Specific instances may need to be discussed with the administrator in charge.
  - b. Call JULIE (1-800-892-0123) before digging.
4. If a tree walk or park site is not a workable option, the development of the school arboretum with smaller habit plants may be an option.

## **Blowouts**

1. Construct a classification scheme just for the trees at your site.
2. Map out one area of the school with all the dimensions standardized. Place all obstructions to trees, and objects that would cause trouble for trees (i.e., power lines, sidewalks, streets, areas that are salted in winter, water retention area, etc.).

This exercise does not require a student guide.

## **Parkway Tree Use Form**

Dear Owner:

Please be advised that \_\_\_\_\_ School wishes to include the tree(s) on your parkway in a study of trees in our town. The students will take several sets of measurements on your tree(s) each year. The measurements will be used to develop a rating system for the quality and longevity of the tree(s). When combined with others, the data from your tree will also help the students to develop a broad based set of data that can be used to develop possible courses of action for the future. The data will be made available to neighbors, and city officials, to assist them in determining the condition of the trees.

The students of \_\_\_\_\_ School do promise not to cause damage to your tree(s), and to provide you with yearly updates on the condition of your tree(s). Please sign and date the authorization below. Without your signature your tree(s) cannot be used in this study.

If you have any questions regarding the type of tests or measurements the students will perform,

please call - name: \_\_\_\_\_ at phone: (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_, during school hours.

Thank you.

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(detach here)

owner: \_\_\_\_\_ date: \_\_\_\_\_

address: \_\_\_\_\_

city, state, and zip: \_\_\_\_\_

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