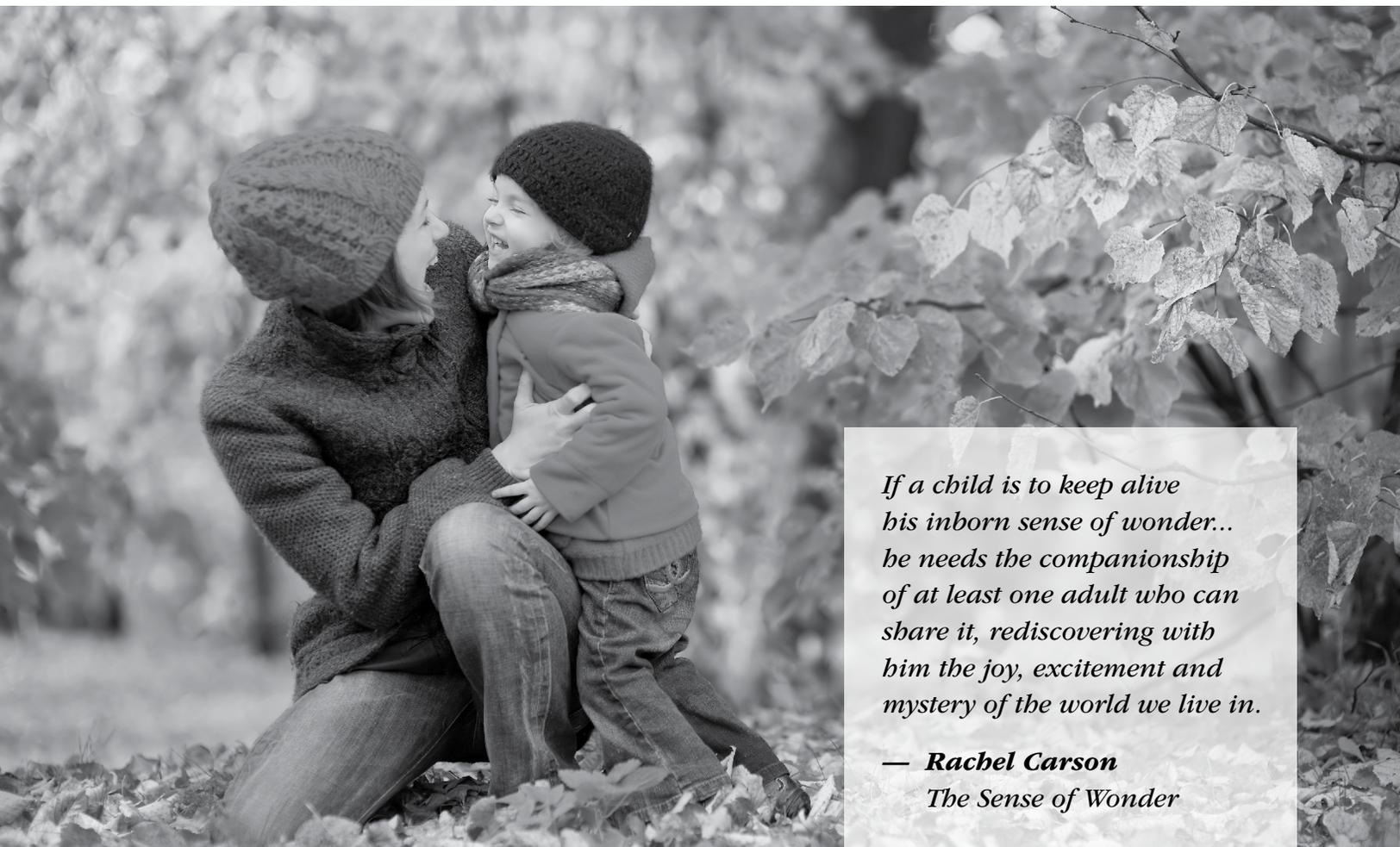




Working With Children

**TREE CITY USA®
BULLETIN**

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*If a child is to keep alive
his inborn sense of wonder...
he needs the companionship
of at least one adult who can
share it, rediscovering with
him the joy, excitement and
mystery of the world we live in.*

— **Rachel Carson**
The Sense of Wonder

Tree planting, improving the environment, and children go hand in hand. All are the future, the hope of tomorrow. Working with children is one of the most important things we can do in urban and community forestry, and all it takes is a good idea and a little understanding of young people.

Think back to when you first became interested in trees. Do you recall the adult who steered you into a scout project or made it possible for you to attend an Arbor Day program?

Chances are that each of us was influenced by someone who cared about the environment and cared about children. Today, many adults want to “pay back” a debt of gratitude by introducing children to the wonderful world of trees, but they are not sure how best to proceed. In the pages that follow are some examples of projects and organizations

that are performing modern miracles by putting children in touch with trees and nature. They are transforming lives and at the same time making neighborhoods better places in which to live.

Will kids be receptive to the right kind of help? Consider these findings from a study of 8- to 15-year-olds conducted by the Disney Institute. When asked about their biggest concern for the future, “the environment” was right up at the top just behind “hate” and “violence.” When young leaders were asked to define “the biggest challenge you faced in making a difference in your community,” the top answer by an overwhelming margin was that kids “are not taken seriously by adults.” In another survey, when the organization Kids F.A.C.E. (Kids for a Clean Environment) asked its 300,000 members what they would like to do to make the world a better place, “tree planting” was the number one response.



Arbor Day Foundation
100 Arbor Avenue • Nebraska City, NE 68410

Trees Affect Young Lives

Each year dozens of examples are brought to the attention of the Arbor Day Foundation of how the lives of young people have been changed when someone has taken the time to introduce them to trees and tree care. For example, Arbor Day award winner Libby Putz, a middle school teacher in Omaha, Nebraska, has shown how a student club, Earthsavers, changed a disruptive, troubled girl into a student who received an 'A' in high school biology. In Denver, Colorado, another award-winning teacher, Pattyanne Corsentino, cited a young lady who entered her outdoor classroom program headed toward a life of drug use and other problems. She left the program with higher self-esteem, greater respect for others, and a respect for nature. She graduated and pursued a career in computer-aided graphic design.

Here are some other examples of the influence of trees and nature...

"After the planting, we sat around Marcie (the tree). I thought about how big she'd grow, and how much good one tree could do in the future. Realizing what one individual could accomplish by planting one tree gave me a sense of power I didn't have before. I didn't feel my individual efforts could make a difference until that moment."

— *Tara Church, at age 12*
Former president of Tree Musketeers,
now a graduate of Harvard Law School

"The city of Oakland was a place of extreme sorrow — cold cement, cold people, and a cold place. Friends get killed, friends go to jail. The environment is a stone jungle. Crime, violence, and depression are all interlocked together... (Then he was taken on an overnight field trip outside the city.) Arriving in the forest — it was awesome, you know? It was indescribable. Can you imagine? I was used to city lights, and all of a sudden there were no lights. There were stars — you know what I'm saying? That's just one of the beautiful things I saw and learned that elevated my heart. What struck me was that there were all these trees — you know, trees! Big green ones!"

— *Kimani Birden, at age 17*
He decided he wanted to become a botanist.



We received this note from Sharon Gaspers of St. Mary's School in Bellevue, Nebraska, after a visit to the Arbor Day Farm Tree Adventure and Nature Explore Classroom with her students.

"I could tell the students were inspired because they were drawing and writing when we returned and making references to birds, trees, and canopies in their drawing and writing. They thanked me over and over for organizing the trip."

— *Sharon Gaspers, Early Childhood Educator*
Bellevue, Nebraska

RESEARCH SHOWS INFLUENCE OF TREES ON CHILDREN

For many years, a growing body of research literature has shown how trees improve lives in such ways as aiding recovery from operations, shortening hospital stays, reducing domestic violence, making workers more content with their jobs and shoppers happier with businesses. Now Dr. Frances Kuo and colleagues at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign are documenting effects on children. Here are some findings from her latest studies:

- In observations of over 200 children in an urban public housing neighborhood, children exhibited more healthy

patterns of play and had more access to adults in spaces with trees and grass than in barren spaces.

- In a study of 96 families having children with Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorders, it was found that activities taking place in "green" outdoor settings were systematically rated as better in terms of AD/HD symptoms than the same activities indoors or at "built" outdoor settings. The "greener" a child's usual after-school setting, the milder their AD/HD symptoms in general.

How to Match Age With Activities

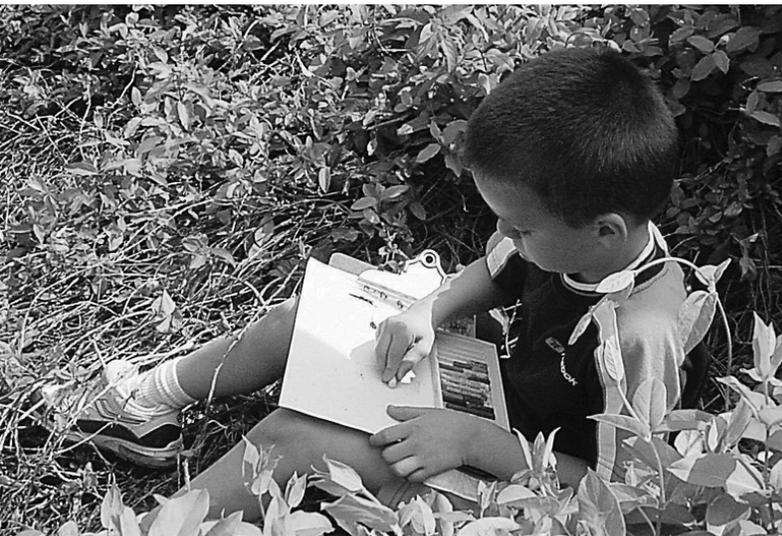
Freeman Tilden, writing in *Interpreting Our Heritage*, a classic book that serves as a bible for park rangers and environmental educators, declared that one of the six basic principles for doing the job right is: *Interpretation addressed to children should not be a dilution of the presentation to adults, but should follow a fundamentally different approach.* Child development specialists agree with Tilden. They expand on his advice by also encouraging anyone who works with children to be sure to match the program to the age group. Here are some tips that may help.

		SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES:
At ages 2 & 3	<p>CHILDREN LOVE TO . . . move, sing, build and play; hunt for patterns or shapes; touch and manipulate natural objects.</p> <p>AND ARE ALSO LEARNING TO . . . develop a sense of wonder that can be a motivation for life-long learning.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Move like a tree in the wind. • Look for shapes and patterns in nature (leaves, bark, etc.) • Take a nature color hike. • Explore the outdoors with an enthusiastic adult.
At ages 4 & 5	<p>CHILDREN LOVE TO . . . touch, taste, smell, hear, and experience things for themselves; use their rich imaginations; learn by doing; participate in dramatic play, including inventing games; tell stories; sing; collect things; draw pictures.</p> <p>AND ARE ALSO LEARNING TO . . . share with others and control inner selves (including their love to talk!); ask lots of questions; sort and classify; work with concepts such as numbers, sizes, textures, colors, etc.; understand cause and effect; take turns; respect rules.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sort cones and types of seeds. • Tell a tree story and let them make up the ending. • Make up and sing songs together about local trees. • Suggest pictures to draw. • Plant and care for seeds. • Have them, with closed eyes, identify sounds; with open eyes, list colors and natural objects by color groupings. • Let them feel different bark textures. • Have students help plan and do a puppet show. • Spend time outdoors!
At ages 6 to 8	<p>CHILDREN LOVE TO . . . learn about “real life” tasks (taking photos, making real things, creating serious collections); play games with more detailed rules; watch magic; engage in group activities.</p> <p>AND ARE ALSO LEARNING TO . . . enjoy reading and solving problems.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plant and care for a group garden. • Build models; make nature crafts. • Stage an Arbor Day play. • Visit museums, zoos, etc. • Teach simple tree identification and how trees grow and touch their lives. • Play “Web of Life” circle (each student represents a plant or animal. String is used to show dependencies on others in the circle. Then one is “removed,” so ecological effects are demonstrated).*
At ages 9 to 11	<p>CHILDREN LOVE TO . . . read fiction and “how-to” material; learn about careers; fantasize about their future; belong to clubs/organizations.</p> <p>AND ARE ALSO LEARNING TO . . . understand concepts without hands-on experience; play competitive sports.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teach skills such as pruning. • Stage an Arbor Day play with elaborate props. • Help with tree-related activities in scouts, 4-H, and other organizations. • Try poetry reading (e.g. Robert Frost’s ‘Birches’) and writing.
At ages 12 to 16	<p>CHILDREN LOVE TO . . . show off; test limits; be liked by peers; put feelings into action; improve skills; make new friends.</p> <p>AND ARE ALSO LEARNING TO . . . gain a sense of identity; think in the abstract; develop work habits; look for “heroes” outside their families; be introspective; set goals; take an interest in moral reasoning; adopt role models.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do park improvement projects. • Let them help with large scale tree planting, adopt-a-tree projects. • Set up recycling projects; sponsor other environmental activities. • Introduce tree issues that require value judgments. • Suggest keeping a journal of local phenology (dates flowers and leaves appear on different species). • Invite participation in tree board projects. • Arrange for volunteer jobs at zoos, botanical gardens, etc. • Explain career options in urban forestry, tree care, etc.; arrange talks by professionals.

*Adapted from *Sharing Nature With Children* by Joseph B. Cornell (Dawn Publications).

Exemplary Programs for Children

Sometimes the best way to work with children is to join with others who are doing this work in outstanding ways, or to incorporate parts of their programs into your own. Here are some examples that have gained national reputations for excellence.



Appropriate outdoor play activities are especially important during a child's formative years.



A Collaborative Program of
Arbor Day Foundation and
Dimensions Educational Research Foundation

NATURE EXPLORE

Nature Explore is a collaborative program of the Arbor Day Foundation and Dimensions Educational Research Foundation. The whole purpose of Nature Explore's multifaceted programs is to connect young children with nature. Its programs are based on research and field testing and help is available for communities to use the guiding principles at schools, day care centers, nature preserves and other public or private facilities. Nature Explore includes:

- **Nature Explore Classrooms.** These unique outdoor spaces can be created on vacant property or through the redesign of existing parking lots, asphalt-covered playgrounds or similar sites. By following the Foundation's guiding principles, the created space can join a growing network of Certified Nature Explore Classrooms. Young children of all learning styles are the beneficiaries of these spaces that include the opportunity to exercise their imaginations, enjoy healthful outdoor exercise, and become acquainted with nature in even the most urban settings.
- **Nature Explore Playscapes** are similar to Classrooms except they can be created in backyards.
- **Workshops.** A variety of workshops are available to help leaders or parents understand and implement the principles of Nature Explore.
- **Design Consultations** are available to help with planning to design a new Classroom or re-design an outdoor space for use by children. Trained staff, including landscape architects are available to help with every step of the process from planning to construction and training local staff.

Please see page 8 for a publication that provides greater details about Nature Explore.

FOR MORE INFORMATION...

For a more complete description of the Nature Explore program and how it can help, please visit natureexplore.org or also see Page 8 of this bulletin.

TREE MUSKETEERS — NOT JUST ACTION, BUT A PHILOSOPHY

Of the many organizations that focus on using trees or the outdoors to get young people headed down the right road in life, Tree Musketeers of El Segundo, California, is one of the most unusual — and most effective.

Tree Musketeers was founded in 1987 when a group of 13 Brownie Girl Scouts chose Arbor Day as a project. Community interest in the tree-planting holiday had waned, so the girls began a weekly column that was carried by local newspapers. Next they planned and sought support for planting 30 Arbor Day trees, contacted speakers, made decorations and developed a skit. Tree Musketeers soon grew to 100 children focusing on learning about the responsibilities and rewards of community leadership. This led to a National Arbor Day Award in 1989 and the projects have never stopped! A recycling center was created, the newspaper column continued, homes were found for thousands of seedlings, and 700 trees were planted in the city of El Segundo.

A few of the many successful projects sponsored by Tree Musketeers include:

One in a Million

More than one million kids were recruited to volunteer one million hours to plant one million trees by the end of 2000. To celebrate the success of the campaign, a tree was planted in Washington, DC, during the national meeting of the Society of American Foresters.

National Youth Environmental Summit

Over 600 delegates from around the world were attracted to this “by kids, for kids” conference in Cincinnati, Ohio. The theme was ‘Partners for the Planet’ and included workshops (some with adult partners, some without) on trees, natural resources and waste management. The conference resulted not only in new and shared knowledge, but a powerful sense of united effort as the delegates returned home to foster “by kids” environmental stewardship in their communities.

Partners for the Planet

The reach of Tree Musketeers is now international. Through its Partners for the Planet Network, Tree Musketeers provides a way for kids to function as an international youth movement for a better environment. The guiding principle is to have participants around the world operate under their own banners while addressing their own hometown issues. This program includes a website, speakers bureau and projects such as the ambitious 3 x 3 campaign. The objective of the 3 x 3 campaign is to have 3 million kids plant 3 million trees to help fight climate change.

A Website for Learning

This website has been developed both for young people and adults. It spans environmental issues from trees to oceans and includes a section on leadership and another that features an array of fun things for kids to do. It is worth viewing at <http://treemusketeers.org/learn>.

TREE MUSKETEERS: SOME GUIDING PHILOSOPHY

Don't listen when people say that you can't change the world. If we all take care of our own little pieces of the Earth, then neighborhood by neighborhood kids will change the world.

— *Message from the 8-year-old founders of Tree Musketeers*

A key component of the philosophy behind Tree Musketeer's success and effectiveness is that the kids themselves must be “in the driver's seat.” By truly empowering young people to plan, make decisions and act upon those decisions, they learn to take control of their own futures. This not only develops a greater sense of responsibility and self-esteem, it reduces the fear and despair that comes from feeling powerless. This, of course, does not mean that adults should not help! Quite to the contrary, they need to work as partners, helping as best they can.

Tree Musketeer members conduct “Sitting in the Driver's Seat Workshops” for kids about the responsibilities of environmental leadership. Adult leader Gail Church has a workshop available on “Backseat Driving.” For more information about these national campaigns for local implementation, see the Tree Musketeer's website. Here is a sample from one of the workshops...

Tips on Backseat Driving— The Adult Role in Youth-Led Programs

- ✓ Share — don't sell. Put all your ideas, wisdom, and experience out on the table, then step back. Let the youth leaders choose what will be useful to them.
- ✓ Coach — don't lead. Learn to ask lots of questions such as “How can I help?” If you see something your youth partner overlooked, offer a suggestion such as, “Would you like me to work on a press release?”
- ✓ Mentor — don't teach. This is a fine line difference. Think like an executive assistant and the child is your boss.
- ✓ Do what a good backseat driver would do. Be an extra set of eyes on a foggy night. Get out a map if you are lost. Make conversation to keep the driver awake. Enrich the driver training experience.
- ✓ Fasten your seat belt! The road to youth-led success can be an exhilarating ride.



Tree Boards and Young People

Are young people involved in tree board activities in your community – other than in Arbor Day celebrations? Young folks can bring energy and imagination to tree boards while at the same time gaining knowledge from more experienced adults.

BOARD MEMBERSHIP

If your ordinances and circumstances allow, consider adding a high school student or college student to your board. La Grande, Oregon, has set the mark with then-16-year-old Paco Wenzel, possibly the nation's youngest tree board member. In 1998 alone, Paco spent over 100 hours doing field work with trees, plus attending meetings and planning sessions. His activities were recognized with the 1998 Oregon Urban Forestry Volunteer Merit Award.

EAGLE SCOUT PROJECTS

Hundreds of Eagle awards have been earned with trees helping to meet the project requirement. Randy Evans of Malad, Idaho, went further than most and actually spearheaded the creation of his community's tree ordinance and first tree board. The goal of his successful efforts was the recognition of Malad as a Tree City USA.



TREE CITY USA®

THINK PARTNERSHIPS!

Tree boards are often in need of helping hands to carry out projects. If this happens to your group, think about young people. Boy Scouts seeking their Eagle award are often in search of worthy projects. Church groups and others use community service as teaching opportunities. Errant youngsters are sometimes given community service hours not only as punishment but as a way to gain a sense of responsibility. Local officials and youth leaders will welcome your ideas, but contact them well in advance of when the work needs to be done.



Taking Tree Education into the Classroom

Teachers usually appreciate an opportunity to enrich their classrooms through the use of outside speakers. This partnership will work best if you contact the principal or teacher early in the semester so your program can be scheduled appropriately. Here is a checklist of things to discuss with the teacher:

- ❑ Specifically what the students will learn. This can be expressed in the form of an instructional objective, such as: “the student will be able to list 3 things roots must have in order for a tree to live a healthy life,” or “...explain what can happen to a tree if its bark is damaged.”
- ❑ How well you expect the children to be able to perform specific tasks involved in the project. Inquire if you will need to make any allowances for children with various handicaps.
- ❑ Where the activity or lesson fits in the sequence of learning that semester. That is, what will they have already been taught related to your topic so you can build on that and take the students to a higher level.
- ❑ How many children are in the class?
- ❑ Will it be inside or outside, and if the latter, what foul weather plans should be made?
- ❑ Who will provide what equipment and materials — in detail!
- ❑ If a field trip, what pre-trip and/or post-trip activities will enhance the experience.



MORE TIPS:

- ✓ Always start by considering the age range of the children and make sure your methods and information are appropriate to that specific group.
- ✓ When providing tree seedlings, be sure to include planting instructions and have a place available for children who live in apartments or have no appropriate space for trees.
- ✓ Have adequate assistance. Take along enough volunteers or ask some parents to help.
- ✓ If you have a great program, train others to take it to the schools. An award-winning model for this approach is the Plants Grow Children program created by Cooperative Extension in Benton and Franklin Counties, Washington. Different levels of the lessons are available for grades K-6 and are presented by members of the local Master Gardener program. Thousands of children are reached in this way each year. For more information, visit <http://ext100.wsu.edu/benton-franklin/gardening/children/about/>.



NOT ALL CHILDREN LEARN THE SAME WAY

Educational psychologists remind us that children of all ages have different “learning styles.” Some, for example, respond favorably to structured teaching methods such as lectures, workbooks, films, directed projects, keeping notebooks, etc. Others, however, will be more interested in less structured methods such as open-ended problems, simulations, discussions, individual projects, etc. Poor attention may be due to a mismatch of learning style and teaching method. To counter this problem, either get to know your group well, or be prepared with a mix of methods that will be sure to hit all interests.

Similarly, in *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences* (Basic Books), Howard Gardner suggests that different children function best in one or more of eight domains: linguistic, logical-mathematical, spatial, musical, bodily-kineshetic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, and naturalistic. Including activities that use skills from more than one of these areas will help all children participate more enthusiastically.

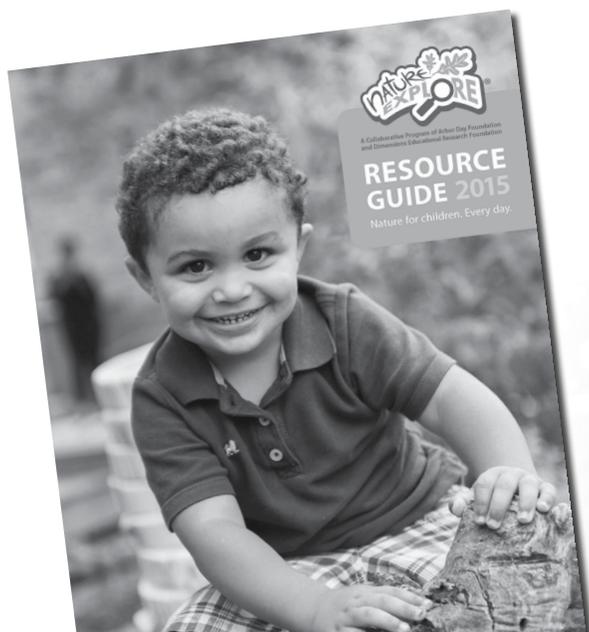
A Most Unusual Catalog

A primary purpose of Arbor Day Foundation's emphasis on young people is that they are tomorrow's stewards of the environment. In most cases, today's stewards were introduced to nature through outdoor play and early lessons about nature and natural resources. Today, those opportunities — especially for urban children — are rare. Nature Explore Classrooms and Playscapes are one way to assure that children can escape the world of plastics and electronics and have an opportunity to be outdoors in a safe environment, use their imaginations, and touch leaves, soil, wood and other natural materials.

To help parents, teachers and youth leaders find durable, outdoor play equipment, Nature Explore offers its free *Resource Guide*. Some of the unusual items include:

- Durable music and drama equipment
- Sturdy, child-size play tables and benches
- Wooden blocks and other toys
- Items from nature to play with, crawl through and walk on
- Child-size garden equipment
- Rustic signs and fencing materials
- Nature study equipment

For a free copy of the *Resource Guide*, including more details about Nature Explore and its programs, please visit natureexplore.org or phone 1-888-908-8733.



FOR MORE INFORMATION...

Direct links to additional helpful information can be found at arborday.org/bulletins.

Tree City USA Bulletin ORDER FORM

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Previous bulletins that may be especially helpful when working with children are listed below. For a complete list of back issues, please visit arborday.org.

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8. Don't Top Trees	8. _____
12. What City Foresters Do	12. _____
13. Trees for Wildlife	13. _____
16. How to Recycle Shade Tree Materials	16. _____
21. How Trees Can Save Energy	21. _____
30. Ten Tree Myths to Think About	30. _____
33. How to Interpret Trees	33. _____
36. How to Work with Volunteers Effectively	36. _____
38. The Way Trees Work	38. _____
— Tree City USA Annual Report	_____
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Annual Friends of Tree City USA Membership	\$15.00	\$ _____
Tree City USA Bulletin 3-Ring Binder	\$ 5.00	\$ _____
Complete Bulletin Set, with binders	\$99.00	\$ _____
TOTAL PAYMENT:		\$ _____

Order Tree City USA Bulletins online at arborday.org or send this form and mail with your payment to:

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PHOTOS COURTESY OF: Yesikka Vivancos (page 7, lower left)

