Nature Explore Classrooms Connect Children With Nature

Children today spend less time outdoors and are more disconnected from nature than ever before. At the same time, studies show increasing rates of childhood obesity, diabetes, and behavior challenges. Addressing the problem is the growing Nature Explore program, a collaborative project of the Arbor Day Foundation and Dimensions Educational Research Foundation. Nature Explore provides comprehensive, field-tested resources to help educators, administrators, and families make nature part of the daily lives of children.

The Nature Explore Classroom at Aurora Cooperative Preschool in Bainbridge has been personalized with regional plantings, flowers, shrubs, and many large donated and cut maple tree trunk sections from a local fallen tree. Fountain grass has been planted against the chain link fence to soften the area while natural reed fencing and stepping stones add natural texture and earth tones. A rain barrel, watering cans, troughs, rain gauges, and thermometers add a water element to the classroom.

To learn more about Nature Explore Classrooms in Ohio, please visit natureexplore.org/classrooms.

Trees Shade Overheated Neighborhoods

The Arbor Day Foundation’s dedicated members are making a difference by planting trees in their communities across the United States. Our 35,191 Ohio members helped plant more than 300,610 trees across the state last year.

Retired firefighter Paul Gallagher appreciates the efforts. He lives in an area of Cincinnati prone to unbearable heat on many summer days. The shade and buffering offered by newly planted trees is already making a difference.

“I used to be able to look out my window and see the heat rising off the pavement,” Paul said. “Once the trees went in, it felt 10 degrees cooler when I walked down the block.”

Each fall, the City of Cincinnati works with the local utility provider to sponsor the Cincinnati ReLeaf program. This partnership provides street trees to residents for planting in the street right-of-way or within 30 feet. Citizen groups have taken advantage of the program to plant virtually every available planting site in Paul’s neighborhood, as well as on vacant lots, front yards, school grounds, and park lands.

Were it not for Cincinnati’s aggressive tree-planting program, Paul’s neighborhood — along with others throughout the city — would not have experienced cooler summer temperatures and added measures of peace and comfort.
Brannon Home Place

Leaders in the Appalachian Regional Reforestation Initiative (ARRI) are planting trees in an area of the country once known for its bountiful hardwoods and beautiful forests. But throughout the past three decades, that area has been decimated by mining coal.

Brannon Home Place is a farm in Coshocton County where mining reclamation impacted about 21 acres of the landscape in the early 1980s and 50 acres in the 1990s. Much of the area disturbed by mining was heavily compacted and void of trees. The Arbor Day Foundation and its partners wanted to change that.

In April 2014, more than 16 tree species were planted across 30 acres of Appalachian landscape in eastern Ohio. Prior to planting, the land was cross-ripped using heavy machinery meant to alleviate compaction, enhance water infiltration, and allow the newly planted trees to develop proper root system. One of the acres was devoted to a planting event in which 17 volunteers spent a morning putting trees in the ground. As the new trees grow, this project will create a patch of young forest habitat that many species will rely upon for forage and protection. In all, 20,400 new trees were planted.

Tree Campus USA

Colleges and universities across the United States can be recognized as Tree Campus USAs by meeting five standards developed to promote healthy trees and student involvement. By meeting the annual standards and being recognized as a Tree Campus USA, the campus not only benefits the environment but instills pride in the students, faculty, and community.

The following Ohio schools have been recognized as Tree Campus USAs:

- Denison University
- Kent State University
- Kent State University at Salem
- Kent State University at Stark
- Kenyon College
- Ohio Northern University
- The College of Wooster
- The Ohio State University
- The Ohio State University Wooster Campus
- University of Mount Union
- Urbana University
- Youngstown State University

Learn more about the Tree Campus USA program at arborday.org/treecampususa.

Ohio Tree City USAs Support, Enhance Community Forestry

The Arbor Day Foundation’s Tree City USA® program encourages, supports, and strengthens effective urban and community forestry programs in diverse communities nationwide through recognition, education, and publicity. From the humble beginning of the program 38 years ago, it has grown to be the leading community forestry recognition program in the country, with more than 3,400 designated Tree City USAs across America.

Tree City USA is thriving in Ohio because of the strong partnership between the Arbor Day Foundation and the Ohio Division of Forestry. Ohio boasts 244 certified Tree City USA communities. Last year, Ohio Tree City USAs spent a combined total of $43,404,627 on their urban forestry budgets, benefiting the more than 5.2 million Ohio residents who live in those communities. The dedication of Ohio’s urban and community foresters, city officials, and citizens to planting and caring for trees in their cities and towns helps increase energy savings, clean the air and water, and beautify the entire state.

Contacts

For more information about programs offered by the Arbor Day Foundation and our work in Ohio, please visit arborday.org or call:

Member Services
Arbor Day Foundation
211 N. 12th St.
Lincoln, NE 68508
888-448-7337
Fax: 402-474-0820
info@arborday.org

Robert Boyles
State Forester
Division of Forestry
2045 Morse Road, Bldg. H-1
Columbus, OH 43229
614-265-6699
Fax: 614-447-9231
bob.boyles@dnr.state.oh.us

Tyler Stevenson
Urban Forestry Coordinator
Division of Forestry
2045 Morse Road, Bldg. H-1
Columbus, OH 43229
614-265-6707
Fax: 614-447-9231
tyler.stevenson@dnr.state.oh.us