

Trees Need Us, We Need Trees

Nº. 16

PRIMARY

Science | Health and PE



LESSON SUMMARY

To provide students with an opportunity to plant and care for trees.



Activity Information

Estimated Duration:	45 minutes plus an hour session in about 3 to 4 weeks.
Materials:	Tree seeds or seeds of native flowers, potting soil, one small pot or plastic container per child, five extra pots.
Setting:	Indoors/Outdoors
Key Vocabulary:	Seed, life cycle, stewardship, adaptation

Teacher Background

Plants have the same needs we do. In nature, seedlings must compete for survival. Nature compensates for a high mortality rate among seedlings by making mature trees produce large quantities of seeds, by special adaptations such as fire stimulation of seeds or by methods of dispersing seeds over a wide area.

As good environmental stewards we have learned methods to raise the survival rates for seedlings. These methods are based upon the characteristics of the tree species and the recognized needs of air, water, food, light, warmth and space. In a forest, replanting is done on a large scale, often with hundreds of thousands of seedlings or millions of seeds at a time.

ACTIVITY

Step 1 Discuss with the students the needs we have in order to stay alive (air, food, water, light, warmth, space). All living things have these same needs, including plants. When we are very young, our parents provide these needs for us. Trees and other plants must obtain these things themselves. We can help.

Step 2 Have each student plant a seed or seeds in one of the pots. Demonstrate how the pot is to be filled with soil, the seed planted just below the surface and water added. Have each student label his or her pot. Place in a warm spot such as a windowsill. Set up a schedule for watering (once or twice a week) and turn the pots once a week to promote straight growth of the stems. As an alternative, the pots can be sent home for the students to care for.

Step 3 Keep records of when the first seed sprouts, how long it took for the last seed to sprout, rate of growth, etc. If a seed fails to grow, assign one of the extra plants to that student for their care.

Step 4 After four weeks, make arrangements to replant the seedlings or flowers. The flowers could become part of a schoolyard naturalization program. Tree seedlings could be planted in an existing woodlot where there are gaps in the trees. (Seedlings should not be planted in the shade of larger trees) Individual trees could be planted in the students' yards if conditions are right. They may also be donated to a local environmental club or other interested adult group for planting in a suitable site.