

Arbor Day Education Resource

Arbor Day falls every year on June 5th. It is much more than the start of the tree-planting season – think of it as a celebration of everything that depends on trees and the importance of them in our everyday lives. **Whangia ka tupu, ka puawai – that which is nurtured, blossoms and grows.**

Tāne Mahuta

Tāne Mahuta is the atua of the forests and birds, and the son of Ranginui (Sky father) and Papatūānuku (Earth mother). Tāne not only separated his parents creating earth and sky, but also created Te Waonui a Tāne (*the great forests of Tāne*) and his children – nga tamariki a Tāne – birds and insects to live in the forest and the berries and honey for them to eat. In Aotearoa New Zealand, Arbor Day celebrates the mauri (life force) of our forests and trees and their role in sustaining mahinga kai and indigenous biodiversity.

Why are trees so important?

- Trees supply oxygen that humans and other creatures need to breathe.
- They shelter us from overexposure to the sun.
- Tree roots stabilise the soil and prevent erosion.
- Trees provide food and shelter to us, birds and other wildlife.
- They provide us with colour, flowers, and fragrance.

Arbor Day plantings in Christchurch – Get involved!

Halswell Quarry
10am, Saturday 28 May

Huntsbury Track (Summit Road Entrance)
1pm, Saturday 4 June

Charlesworth Reserve
2pm, Sunday 5 June

Visit ccc.govt.nz/parks-and-gardens/get-involved-with-parks for more information.

What can I read? Arbor Day Booklist

All available at the Christchurch City Libraries:

- The Trees and Me (*Year 0–2*)
- In the Bush: Explore and Discover New Zealand's Native Forest (*Year 2–4*)
- Taketakerau: the Millennium Tree (*Year 3–8*)
- Celebritees: Historic and Famous Trees of the World (*Year 4–6*)
- Branching Out: How Trees are Part of Our World (*Year 6–8*)

Top Spots for Terrific Trees in Christchurch

1. **Botanic Gardens** – explore amongst the majestic natives in the New Zealand gardens.
2. **Bottle Lake Forest Park** – walk, run or bike the trails in Christchurch's 1,000 hectare pine forest.
3. **Riccarton Bush** – wander among the some of the last remnants of lowland podocarp forest in Canterbury.
4. **Halswell Quarry** – visit the unique Sister City Gardens, each designed to represent the character and beauty of Christchurch's sister cities.

Curriculum Level One

Leaf Litter Feely Bag – collect natural items from under trees with students (e.g. leaves, pinecones, bark, twigs). Put these in a bag with some unnatural items of similar size and shape, and then have them try to pull out and identify items that belong to trees.



Discuss: How is leaf litter important to trees? Do any creatures need the leaf litter too? Have students return all the natural items back to the tree.

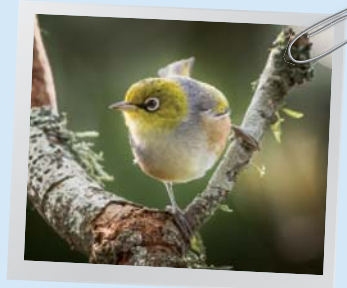
Seed Guardians – Read a book like *'The Trees and Me'* and brainstorm ideas about why trees are important. Then propagate some trees to plant at next year's Arbor Day. Students plant a native seedling, give it a special name and keep them in the classroom to care for them and observe them grow.

Discuss: What we can do to keep the seedlings healthy and to help them grow strong for the future?

Curriculum Level Two

Leaf Art – Share the story of Tāne Mahuta and discuss why trees are special. Take plaster casts or leaf rubbings of some leaves from native trees (remember to use fallen leaves to protect the tree). Look for differences in size, colour, texture and shape to identify and name the trees in Te Reo. Record names and identifying adjectives in a creative way to display alongside leaf art.

Bird Hotels – Brainstorm all the New Zealand birds students can think of (see *'In the Bush: Explore and Discover New Zealand's Native Forests'* for ideas). Then use recycled materials (such as boxes, cardboard tubes, plastic containers) to construct a 'tree' with the parts necessary to provide accommodation for birds – think about branches, leaves, space for nests and food sources. Observe the differences in the recycled trees to introduce the concept of biodiversity and discuss why birds need a variety of trees to provide the right sort of food and shelter.



Arbor Day Learning Experiences

Curriculum Level Three

Garden Treasure Hunt – What are some of the great places outdoors at your school? Design a garden treasure hunt for younger kids to introduce them to some of the trees and plants at school. Be creative with your ideas (can you find a huge tree? A scented flower? A bird singing? A pointy leaf?) Help them with their hunt and share some of your knowledge about the best outdoor spots.

Food Chains – Research simple food chains of a tree (e.g. at ground level, in the bark, and canopy) at your library (*'In the Bush: Explore and Discover New Zealand's Native Forests'* is a great resource to use). Brainstorm and discuss threats to trees, such as clearing forest for development, climate change and pollution. See if you can come up with some ways to reduce these impacts to keep the food chain in

balance. How can you share these ideas with your family and friends?



Curriculum Level Four

How Green Is Your Neighbourhood? – Divide into teams to survey the trees in your school and neighbourhood. *Try to find out:* Where are trees? How many are there? What species are they? Are there places that would be improved if more trees were planted? Have each group contribute their findings to a class map of the neighbourhood. Come up with an action plan to either improve the amount green space in your community (if you decide there isn't enough), or make better use of the existing green space – how could it be utilised differently?

Global Tree Products – Brainstorm all the things we use in our daily life that are products of trees. Think about everything from the materials the school is built from, through to products like toothpaste containing palm oil. Then record everything you use for a day to see how much you rely on tree products, and discuss what problems this may present (e.g. deforestation, threats to animal species, atmospheric change). Next, think of ways to reduce use of tree products and choose some to put into action (see *'Branching Out: How Trees Are Part of Our World'* for ideas).



Learning Through Action

Learn more about trees and biodiversity through our Environmental LEOTC Programmes offered free to schools by the Christchurch City Council.

- Junior Park Explorers (Year 0–2)
- Park Detectives (Year 3–5)
- Native Nurturing (Year 3–8)
- Creative and Native (Year 5–8)

For further information and to make a booking visit ccc.govt.nz/culture-and-community/learning-resources/learning-through-action

