



PLANTING FOR SCHOOLS

DO YOU WANT TO DO SOME PLANTING AT YOUR SCHOOL?

To have a successful planting at your school, you need to do some planning before you start. Here are some of the things you need to consider.



FIND YOUR CHAMPION

We highly recommend connecting with a local expert. Is there a teacher, parent or grounds person who could be your school's planting champion? Perhaps there is someone involved with a local community group who could give you a hand?

WHY ARE YOU PLANTING?

Are you planting to provide habitat at your school? Do you want to attract birds to your school or a particular critter? Maybe you want some geckos? Are you planting for shade? Once you have decided why you are planting, do some research. If you want to attract birds to your school, which species of bird? Which plants will provide them with food? If you want lizards at your school, they will need food and somewhere to hide. Once you have determined why you are planting, identify the types of trees you will need.

WHAT YOU SHOULD PLANT

New Zealand has many different ecosystems made up of plant communities. To increase your chance of success, you need to plant what is best suited for your area.

Your local native nursery can provide you with advice for the local conditions, let you know the best suited plants for your project and provide advice on suitability. See www.treesthatcount.co.nz/resources/where-can-i-buy-trees/ for a list of the nurseries that we recommend.

You may not be able to plant everything at once. Some species require shelter to thrive, so you may need to plant some plants to provide shelter and then in a couple of years plant the additional species.

WHAT YOU SHOULDN'T PLANT

There are some plants which have toxic berries or leaves. Bear this in mind when planning your planting. Some plants can look messy, are you and the caretaker ok with that? How much time does the school have to maintain the area? If you are short of time, select low maintenance plants.



WHEN SHOULD YOU PLANT?

Plants need moisture. The most successful time to plant is leading into winter. Then the plants will be well established when the warmer drier weather arrives and the school is on holiday.

HOW YOU SHOULD PLANT

- Make sure that the area is free of large weeds that could compete with your plants. It doesn't have to be completely free (bare earth). We recommend keeping low grass cover and planting into the grass – that way the plants don't dry out as much and will need less watering.
- Think about the spacing of your plants. Take into account how big they will grow. We recommend that you place all the plants out and then have a look. We find that planting the same species in groups of three or five looks natural rather than a completely random planting. Also look at the heights of the plants. You may like to position the larger plants at the back of your area, but take into consideration their proximity to fences, neighbours and power lines. Normally you would plant one metre apart except for large trees which could be as much as 5 metres apart.
- It is worth the extra effort to ensure the plants are well planted so that they have the best chance of survival. Most plants won't need fertiliser as there will be some in the potting mix.
- Once you've planted, we recommend putting mulch around the trees, ensuring it is not touching the main stem. Mulch is superb at keeping the weeds down and moisture in.

MAINTENANCE

Once the plants are in the ground, your job is not done! You need to water them and ensure that competing weeds are kept under control. If children are helping, make sure they know the difference between a weed and a desirable plant!

Over summer, you may need to water the plants, or consider installing irrigation. Every few months review the site. Which plants have done well, which not so? If any plants die, consider replacing them with a species that has done well. Children can be hard on plants. Consider using guards until the plants are large enough. In a couple of years once shelter has been provided you can plant the more delicate species.

MORE READING

The Department of Conservation has developed some great resources, including a practical guide on protecting and restoring natural heritage which is available at www.doc.govt.nz/documents/conservation/native-plants/motukarara-nursery/restoration-guide-complete.pdf

Check your local Regional Council's website (http://www.localcouncils.govt.nz/lqip.nsf/wpg_url/Profiles-Councils-by-type-Regional) for planting native trees and shrubs in your region.

Check out our 'Plant like a ninja' video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rUS42YM_Q_k

Please note that Trees That Count can only provide native trees, this is a plant that has the capability of growing to 5 metres or more. A robust planting may include other natives, such as grasses, flaxes.



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