

# Wonder

NEWSLETTER OF THE NATURE ACTION COLLABORATIVE FOR CHILDREN

## The Cyclical Gifts of Trees

Coordinated by Kirsten Haugen on behalf of NACC

*"If gifts and responsibilities are one, then asking 'What is our responsibility?' is the same as asking 'What is our gift?' It is said that only humans have the capacity for gratitude. This is among our gifts."*

– Robin Wall Kimmerer, "Braiding Sweetgrass"

The World Forum Foundation's Nature Action Collaborative for Children and the International Association of Nature Pedagogy ([naturepedagogy.com](http://naturepedagogy.com)) invite you to join in a global gift for our world, our children, our future, and, indeed, ourselves, by planting one million trees around the world. Especially in uncertain times, though they start as tiny seeds, trees grow to give us hope and so much more.



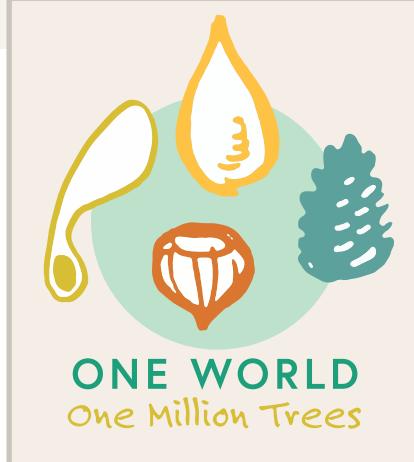
The mission of the Nature Action Collaborative for Children (NACC) is to re-connect children with the natural world by making developmentally appropriate nature education a sustaining and enriching part of the daily lives of the world's children.

[WorldForumFoundation.org/nature](http://WorldForumFoundation.org/nature)

With gratitude, we applaud the many tree planting efforts around the world that are actively combating climate change. Our efforts will add to that. In addition, we intend to inspire you and others to plant trees with children, to experience the deep, cyclical relationship between supporting both trees and children as they grow, and to understand and honor our many connections with trees.

As we plan and plant, let's consider: Trees as protectors—shade, structures, stability, elevation. Trees as providers—fruit, flowers, nuts, fibers, leaves, fuel, lumber. Trees as placemakers—the ones that tell us where we are and remind us of home. Trees as permanence—living long before and after us, measuring each year with a new ring of growth. Trees as "painters"—of endless patterns, textures, colors, shapes. Trees as preservationists—preventing erosion, retaining water, sequestering carbon, regulating temperatures, rejuvenating soil, providing for pollinators. Trees as playmates—inviting us to climb, hide, dance and dream. Trees as progeny—inviting us to nurture and care for what will live on beyond us, so they in turn can offer their gifts to future generations. What other relationships do you have with trees?

Kirsten Haugen



## How to join #onemilliontreesforchildren:

1. Read these and other stories and find resources at [worldforumfoundation.org/trees](http://worldforumfoundation.org/trees).
2. Consult with local experts on the needs of your region and the trees suited to it.
3. Involve children in the ways you plant and care for your new trees.
4. Share your story with us and be counted! Complete our short survey at [worldforumfoundation.org/trees](http://worldforumfoundation.org/trees), then share your stories and images on social media using hashtags #wfnature and #onemilliontreesforchildren.

### A Gift to the Future:

#### The Seeds of Sustainable Tree Planting

by Jim Wike, North Carolina, United States

### Why

While there are numerous and varied reasons for planting trees, most are rooted in optimism. Whether the act of planting is based in physical or emotional sustenance, one thing is generally understood: trees regularly outlive those who plant them. Planting trees is a gift to the future.

### Where

Where we plant trees goes hand in hand with why we plant them. It may be macro or micro in scale, but general areas benefitting from the addition of trees must be considered early on. In a complementary way, consider the tree's desires and needs, as well. Trees that thrive in a forest may not do so well standing alone in a field. With careful further observation, attributes such as soil types, solar aspect and climatic conditions begin to come into play. Be aware of the area immediately adjacent to the tree(s) and consider sun/shade relationships, as well as tree root impacts as each tree reaches mature size.

### What

To come up with a list of potential suitable species, you can start by considering attributes of the trees themselves, such as hardiness, sizes (both at planting and at maturity) and spacings. Think about play affordances, resource production (food, fuel, fiber, medicine, oxygen), environmental contributions (shade, cooling, ground water retention, carbon sequestering, erosion control), and ornamental qualities (leaf type and shape, bloom color or other seasonal interests). Understanding species availability is also helpful.

### When

The timing of planting is a key factor in tree survival rates. Best times for planting do not always coincide with the wishes of groups wanting to plant. Care provided after planting may buffer the impact of poor calendar choices, but whenever possible, heed local advice on best planting periods for the species you wish to grow.

### How

Techniques for planting trees are similar worldwide, but it is always good to gain the advice of local experts regarding appropriate practices on a micro scale, if possible, including understanding early care needs of trees. These can vary with species and size planted but it's generally understood that trees have a much better chance of survival if they are well cared for until they are well established.



### Join NACC on Facebook!

The Nature Action Collaborative for Children invites you to join our new Facebook group!

[facebook.com/groups/wfnature](https://facebook.com/groups/wfnature)

Post your stories about planting trees with children. Share your ideas, challenges and questions about other wonderous ways you connect children and nature. Photos and videos are welcome, however please ensure all images are used with consent from and respect for the children in them, and with their safety in mind. Want to keep us in the loop? Share your posts about children and nature on social media, using the hashtags:

#wfnature and #onemilliontreesforchildren



## A Gift from my Father: The Consciousness of Tree Planting

By Eric Nelson, California, United States

Note: The following was written prior to the emergence of the coronavirus. Once it passes, the virus of carelessness for our planet will remain to be overcome. I hope my message of hope for our planet on the 50th anniversary of Earth Day resonates with you.

—Eric Nelson

As millions around our planet join the effort to plant trees to combat climate change, I am aware that my father taught me something equally important: the consciousness of planting trees. As I grew up in the agricultural town of Visalia in California's Central Valley, a 60-foot silver fir grew at the corner of our isolated downtown residence. At 5 years old, I struggled to sweep its pine needles from our corner sidewalks under my mother's watchful eye. It was a tree my father proudly told me he had planted 50 years earlier at my same age. I learned four things from that experience: 1) little children could contribute to manifesting things bigger than themselves; 2) our creations charge us with responsibility and care; 3) even as children, we can create gifts for others who follow us and who we many never know; 4) we can contribute significantly to the natural world.

My dad also shared that his grade school class planted trees along the highway leading into town on Arbor



*Eric Nelson and his father's Silver Fir.*

Day in (approximately) 1915. Community respect for that planting ensured that some of those trees still stand today, dividing the freeway that was built 50 years later. When redevelopment moved us to the edge of town, my dad used his own money to install in the public cul-de-sac a curbed planting circle with a tall pine tree that beautified the entire neighborhood. He demonstrated in real terms to me what contributing to the public good can look like. Conscious tree planting can remind us of things greater than ourselves, and our ability to contribute to them if we remember our stories and share them with our children and grandchildren.



's celebrate MUD!  
pies! Mud  
! Mud patting!  
Mud sliding! Mud squishing!  
Mud splashing!

Visit [worldforumfoundation.org/mud-day](http://worldforumfoundation.org/mud-day) to learn how and why the Nature Action Collaborative for Children has been celebrating International Mud Day for over 20 years! You'll also find free resources and ideas for planning and sharing your Mud Day fun!

## June 29 is International Mud Day!

When sharing your plans and your Mud Day photos, stories and videos on social media, use our hashtag #wfmudday so we can share in the fun.

**[worldforumfoundation.org/mud-day](http://worldforumfoundation.org/mud-day)**  
#wfmudday



Photo by Kirsten Haugen

## A Gift for the River

By Wil Maheia, Toledo, Belize

Belize is a country with lots of green spaces, although every day those green spaces are threatened. We live in the Toledo district of Belize, which is by far the least developed of Belize's six districts. "Least developed" for us means we have lots of nature! Approximately 35,000 people live in Toledo, in over 40 villages of 100 to 3,000 people. The district has approximately 40 schools run by the church and state—many times a co-relationship referred to as a church state school. For more than 10 years now we at PGTV have been working with schools and often with preschools, planting thousands of trees in school compounds and playgrounds around the district. We also run annual summer camps. Almost all of our camps are nature based and children of almost any age can attend.

Due to a lack of enforcement of environmental laws in most of our communities, people tend to deforest the riparian zones, because they see them as fertile lands. But deforesting riparian zones—green spaces at the water's edge—causes many problems with erosion and loss of habitat. So, for the last two years we bring our youth and smaller children such as JJ to our summer camps and have them participate in planting trees. We typically start with a weekend activity where we sow the seeds in seed bags and then when the rain comes in the summer, we plant our trees. Over the past few years, we have planted thousands of trees to help to maintain the watershed, which in turn will make our rivers healthier. We also plant many fruit trees to attract wildlife to the area. Hundreds of different bird species come to our area because of the abundance of fruit on the trees. It is now a favorite place to birdwatch and at times you will also see some other animals, occasionally even tapir and jaguars.

Planting trees keeps the children of Belize connected to the earth. Our children have fun playing in the trees, picking their fruits – mangos, plums, oranges—and eating the fruits with salt and pepper. They look forward to the trees in all seasons.



Photos courtesy of Wil Maheia



*Children in Belize planting trees.*

### Coming Up Next Issue!

In the next edition of Wonder, learn from Claire Warden and children in her care how they developed a way to take a tree for a walk!

Do you have a "Wonder-filled" story to share? Send it to [kirsten@dimensionsfoundation.org](mailto:kirsten@dimensionsfoundation.org)