

Hosting a TREEMENDOUS KIDS' TREE-PLANTING PARTY

in 5 Easy Steps

andrea koehle jones



Editor's note: Last spring we brought you "How to Host a Kids' Beach Clean-Up Party." We thought it would be fun to bring you another kids' party idea this spring—tree planting. This same easy-to-follow step-by-step process can have your party up and running in no time at all.

sarayut / Depositphotos.com

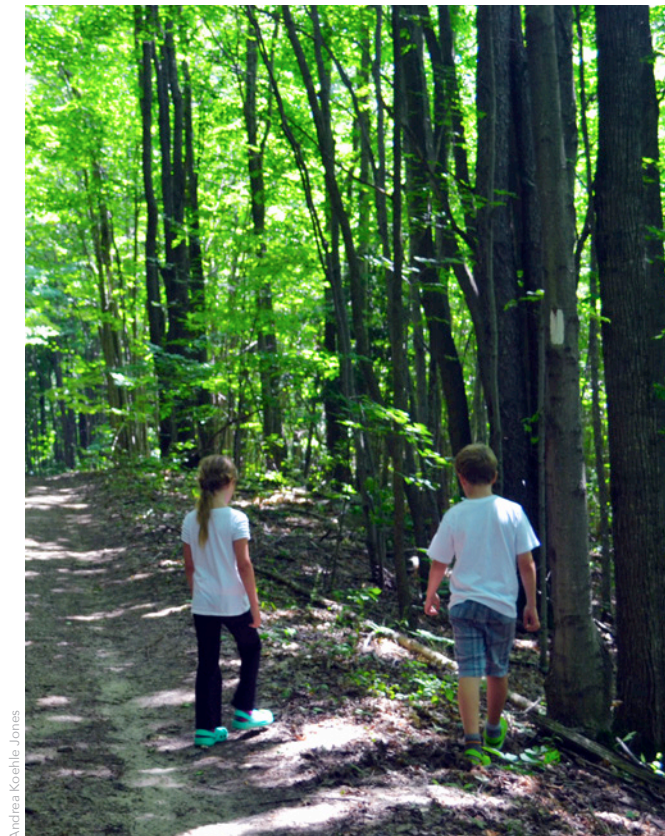
The true joy of a tree-planting party is the enthusiasm of children and young adults, who are having fun while helping our planet. As you stand among these young people, ready to get your hands dirty and join in on the action, you can't help but marvel at how their energy transforms the world around them. Every hole dug and tree seedling planted by these kids leaves a lasting impact, knowing that they were part of something much bigger than themselves.

It's no secret that kids who spend more time outdoors are healthier for it. By organising a tree-planting party for children, you're not only teaching them how to love and respect nature but also providing them with important hands-on experience.

5 STEPS FOR THE COOLEST PARTY!

1. Before the Party

Pre-scouting a location for your tree-planting party (e.g., a nearby forest) will help mitigate any dangers that may exist and allow you to make sure that planting a tree in your chosen area is allowed—check local guidelines with your city or region for any rules that may apply. Alternatively, you can choose to have your party in your own backyard and avoid any unforeseen complications. Then pick up some local, pesticide-free tree seedlings that are suitable for the area they will be planted in—you can seek help from a tree farm or nursery for this.



Andreas Koehle Jones

THE GIFT OF TREE PLANTING

- » allows kids to feel connected to nature and their communities
- » teaches kids how to plant and care for a tree
- » helps kids understand biodiversity and the importance of trees to the world
- » enables kids to develop love/compassion for trees and nature
- » prepares kids to become future climate leaders

2. Send out Your Invites

Have your children invite all their friends! Make sure to include the parents too, as they can help plant a tree or organise art or other projects at the party. Encourage local friends to walk or cycle to your party—it is an eco-event after all.

Tree-planting essentials checklist:

- » boots
- » hat
- » sunblock
- » gloves
- » raincoat

Sample invitation:



3. Eco-Friendly Party

Reuse items around your home as party supplies like jars and other containers that can hold the seedlings before they are planted. Remember to keep your tableware eco too, by using reusable plates and utensils rather than disposable ones. Try to serve locally sourced plant-based food as well where possible.



TREE-THEMED & PLANT-BASED SNACK IDEAS FOR THE BIG DAY:

- » tree seedling cakes/cookies with butterfly and flower decorations and pretzel sticks as baby trunks
- » hummus and tree-shaped 100% organic corn chips
- » branches (more pretzels)
- » vegetable wraps with carrots, cucumbers, avocado, and tofu
- » fruit kabob tree (grapes, strawberries, and blackberries)
- » chocolate cupcakes in planters with icing and cookie crumbs. Use rosemary as a "tree seedling" (remove before eating)
- » you can do snacks, buffet style outdoors, or a picnic under a tree

4. Growing Fun

Plant one tree together or a few in the ground during the party. Give each child a tree seedling to take home in their loot bag. They can plant it in an old mason jar temporarily, then plant it at home later. At the party, make time for playing in a tree house (if available) and/or climbing trees safely.

Andreea Koehle Jones

Kids like to hunt for things, so why not have them find items they will need for the day's tree planting; parents can hide useful items ahead of time. In addition to these needed items, have them look for other things too like signs of nature as well as waste items that should not be there.

Note: Teach kids the "buddy system" and make sure they stay together during the day.

ITEMS FOR TREE PLANTING & OBSERVATION/DISPOSAL:

- » shovels
- » pails for topsoil
- » watering cans
- » a broken branch on the ground
- » a fallen leaf
- » food packaging and any other waste that doesn't belong around trees (discard these)

Items to leave behind: Not all items need to be picked up. Instruct the kiddos to leave certain items where they find them. Tree bark, for example, can be rubbed by taking 100 percent recycled paper and placing it on the tree. Then rub the side of a crayon against the paper to see an etching of the bark.

- » pinecones
- » animal footprints
- » feathers
- » interesting rocks
- » bird's nests and eggs
- » bark from trees



Andreea Koehle Jones

Sorting & Arts

Parents can have the kids create art from the items they've collected. These can include:

- » painting their favourite tree
- » using fallen branches to make wind chimes
- » making clothespin bird feeders
- » making a wish-tree decoration to hang from your tree
- » planting a tree seedling in an old mason jar. Kids can give them as gifts to family and friends who have a place to plant them.

Prizes & Gifts

You can provide all participants with reusable canvas bags made from sustainable materials at the start of the day. These bags can be used to collect items during the scavenger hunt and to bring home any parting gifts you may have for them.

Scavenger hunt prizes: Tree-planting books

- » *The Wish Trees: How Planting Trees Can Help Make the World a Better Place*
- » *One Million Trees: A True Story*
- » *Nell Plants a Tree*

5. Planting a Wish Tree

Children around the world are planting wish trees. The idea was inspired by the popular children's tree-planting book *The Wish Trees: How Planting Trees Can Help Make the World a Better Place*. Preschoolers and early readers are connecting with the book and the idea that you are never too little to help the planet. *The Wish Trees* encourages kids to plant a local tree seedling with their parents and teachers, and then make a wish—especially for the world. Then, every time they return to visit and care for their tree, they can make more wishes! If your children ask you to plant a wish tree with them, jump on this opportunity to learn and grow together. Young children will fall in love with trees and begin to learn how trees can help our planet.

A baby tree is called a seedling. Ask a parent or teacher to help you choose a place to plant it where it can grow strong and healthy. Next, grab a shovel and get ready to change the world.

Can You Dig It?

Digging is fun, and it's okay to get dirty. Roots are the part of the tree that help keep it from falling over. They also gather water and nutrients—a type of tree food—from the soil. Ask an adult to help you measure and dig a hole for your seedling. The hole should be three times as wide as the seedling's roots, but only as deep as the roots. Gently remove the tree seedling from its wrapper or container, then pop it into the hole you dug in the ground, making sure it's standing straight up. Fill in the hole and pat the soil around the tiny tree trunk so the tree feels safe and secure. As you pat the dirt around your wish

tree, close your eyes and make your wish. You can either blow your wish like a kiss out to the world or write it on 100 percent recycled heart- or butterfly-shaped paper, then hand tie it with a ribbon on your tree. Don't forget to return often to check on your tree, water it when needed, and hug it often.



Andreea Koehle Jones

AFTER THE PARTY

Aside from clean-up and making sure nothing is left behind (especially in local parks or forests), you can set up a donation—for on behalf of all the guests—to an environmental organization that plants trees or supports children's environmental programs.

These may include:

- » The ChariTree Foundation
- » Environmental Youth Alliance (EYA)
- » Canadian Friends of Fresh and Green Academy Inc.
- » WWF-CANADA (WORLD WILDLIFE FUND CANADA)
- » Nature Conservancy of Canada

Don't forget to organise and recycle everything you can, and dispose of the rest properly. ♻️