



GUIDELINES FOR A TENNESSEE TREE PROJECT EVENT

Here are some ideas and suggestions to help make your event a success. All documents marked with an * can be found on our website at www.tectn.org/tree.

SET UP LOGISTICS

Select a type, date, time, partners and admission cost

- Read through the entire checklist to see how to prepare.
- Determine if you are hosting a tree planting event, a tree giveaway event or both.
 - You may wish to request a donation of \$5-\$25 per person to help cover event costs and raise money for your organization.
 - If you are giving trees away we suggest requesting a \$3/tree donation. (If your organization did prepay for trees, you must agree to request a \$3/tree donation.)
- Check local event schedules (especially environmental groups) to ensure there aren't other events in town that could take away your participants.
- You may wish to partner with an organization in the community such as a local park, a Scout Troop, Habitat for Humanity, a watershed or other local environmental organization. You may also wish to partner with a business – tree planting events generate good media coverage.
- Determine if you are serving food or providing any other entertainment (such as music or a speaker) during your event.

Choose a location/venue & secure equipment

Tree Planting Events

- Here are some possible locations to consider:
 - Your office/location to provide shade, save energy, or improve water drainage.
 - Local park, greenway or schools
 - An area in the community where trees have been lost through natural causes or development and/or where trees would bring most benefit such as waterways.
- Equipment
 - You can provide equipment or ask participants to bring their own. You may need:
 - One shovel for every two volunteers
 - A pick for rocky areas (and safety glasses)
 - Pruning shears to cut off any dead branches
 - Mulch for tree saplings (seedlings won't need mulch)
 - Soil amendment/compost for saplings
 - Tarps for soil and/or mulch
 - Orange flagging tape (tie loosely around each tree so it won't be mowed or destroyed after planting)
 - A water source to water trees after planting
 - Work gloves and work boots
 - Drinking water
 - Sunblock



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- Treehelp.com's step-by-step instructions for planting trees*
- You may wish to set up a table/display for your organization where attendees can sign in and pick up literature about your organization, the event, and trees.
- You may wish to bring a cash box or bag along with some change for donations.
- Be sure to request trees from the Council at least two weeks in advance. We can ship orders for 100 trees (you will pay for shipping and handling), but you'll have to make arrangements to pick up smaller orders.

Tree Giveaway Events

- Consider the locations listed above and/or:
 - Contact your neighborhood association and give trees away near the neighborhood entrance or clubhouse
 - Give trees away at Earth Day or another Environmental or Garden themed event in the community.
 - Partner with a local grocery store and give trees away at the entrance to the store.
 - Secure a booth at a local farmer's market
- Equipment:
 - We recommend setting up a table/display for your organization where attendees can pick up trees, register, and pick up literature about your organization, the event, and trees.
 - Trees will need to be individually packaged for giveaway. You will need to determine how many trees you can reasonably give away and follow these steps
 - Secure **Plastic bags** to cover the tree seedling roots. Regular grocery type bags work well, and you can ask friends and family to "recycle" their bags by collecting them for your event. We have also used the "umbrella bags" from Publix.
 - Secure **Newspaper** to cover the tree seedling roots. Like above, try to collect recycled newspaper. Take one sheet of newspaper, put the tree root in the center, and fold in half, then wrap the root like a burrito.
 - Next dip the newspaper covered roots into a **bucket of water** let the paper absorb plenty of water, drain and then put into the plastic bag.
 - Finally, close the top of the bag loosely around the tree so the top pokes out, and staple a **Tree Card** to the bag. Tree cards can be found at www.tectn.org/tree. Print on Avery 5376 Business Card OR print on cardstock paper, and then cut ½ inch from the top and bottom of each full page; cut ¾ inch from each side of each full page. Then each card should be cut to be 2" tall and 3.5" wide.
 - Trees can be packaged for individuals as they request them OR prepackaged in advance of the event if you expect big crowds.
 - You may wish to bring a cash box or bag along with some change for donations.



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- Be sure to request trees from the Council at least two weeks in advance. We can ship orders for 100 trees (you will pay for shipping and handling), but you'll have to make arrangements to pick up smaller orders.

Secure your team of helpers and make assignments

You will need several helpers before, during and immediately following the event. Here are some activities for which you may need volunteers:

- In advance of a tree giveaway event, you may need 4-6 people to help prepare the trees for giveaway. Only prepackage what you are sure you will be giving away so you don't have to un-package them later. Trees can be prepared on-site as well. (See above)
- 1 person to welcome participants, talk about the importance of trees, and provide instructions for planting (See "During the Event" section)
- 1- 2 people to sign people in as they arrive + assist with various setup and breakdown activities
- 1-4 people to give trees away depending on crowd expected
- 2-4 leaders to assist participants with tree planting. Ideally you will have a 5:1 ratio of TRAINED leaders to participants but 10:1 will work. Ask the leaders to read the instructions TREEHELP.COM'S STEP-BY-STEP INSTRUCTIONS FOR PLANTING TREES* in advance of the event
- 1-2 people to take pictures + help with serving food as needed

ATTRACTING A BIG CROWD

Customizable documents marked with an * below can be found at www.tectn.org/tree

Invitations and Promotion

- **Website:** Post on your organization's website and send details to Tennessee Environmental Council to post on ours. Please send an email event invitation with the subject line "TN Tree Project Calendar Listing" to tec@tectn.org.
- **Send an EMAIL * invitation** to members of your organization, friends, business associates, and to leaders of other organizations, who can invite their members. Send emails beginning four weeks before your event and send weekly until the day of your event.
- **Post your Event on Facebook, Twitter and/or other Social Networking Sites.** Be sure to update the event if any details change and/or send reminders to participants.
- **Invite VIPs to your event** and let everyone know they are coming! Invite: Elected officials (mayors, city council members, county commissioners, state and federal representatives and senators) ~ Celebrities. And the Heads/Leaders of: Educational Institutions/Schools ~ Chamber of Commerce ~ Churches ~ Local Businesses! If you will have a VIP in attendance, be sure to mention this in your promotional materials.
- **Invite local green business and organizations to sponsor your event and/or set up a display at your event.** You can invite local environmental groups such as park "friends" groups or watershed groups; and/or local businesses that offer green products or services to sponsor your event. In return for their donation you may put their logo on promotional materials, display their banner at your event



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and/or set up a table/display at your event. They may also help you promote the event to their members and employees.

- **Post FLYERS* around town:** Print copies of the flyer and post at schools, community bulletin boards, universities, libraries, restaurants, churches, coffee shops, YMCAs, grocery stores and anywhere else people will see them. Ask permission before posting them and avoid phone poles, mailboxes and other public property as you may be fined.
- **Printed Invitations:** If you have a budget for a mailing, send as many of the FLYER* as you are able. Mail about 2 weeks in advance.
- **Phone Calls:** Place follow up phone calls to all your invitees to invite them personally. Arrange a phone “tree” to get the word out as widely as possible.

Media Outreach

- **Make a list of media outlets** and contacts in your community—newspapers and free publications, TV and radio stations—and find out who covers community events and/or environmental issues.
- **Email or mail a PRESS RELEASE*** we have a sample at www.tectn.org/tree. Send two to four weeks before your event. You can also update this and send it after your event to report the results.
- **Follow up with reporters and film reviewers by phone.** It is rare for a reporter to write about a story based on an email or mailing alone. Call to find out if they would like to attend the event, write about it before it happens or after, and/or see if they have questions or need additional information. Talk about any important local issues such as local deforestation that may be relevant to create a news hook for reporters, and let them know of any VIPs that are attending.
- **Get your event listed** in upcoming events calendars for weekly/daily newspapers, radio, websites, blogs and TV. Many of these sites will list your event if you simply complete an online form.

DURING THE EVENT

Plan to Introduce Your Organization, the Event & Talk about Trees

Before the event gets underway you will want to introduce yourself and your organization and say a few words about why you chose to host this event.

Share instructions for planting trees (read the instructions TREEHELP.COM'S STEP-BY-STEP INSTRUCTIONS FOR PLANTING TREES* in advance of the event and share the instructions with the group that are relevant for your planting situation.) If this is a tree planting event, you will want to have your tree planting leaders train participants on how to plant the tree, how far each should be spaced from one another, and special notes, such as not planting large trees under power lines, and areas where digging is not allowed, such as above sewer or water lines. Tell the group what to do and then provide individual instruction/directions to participants as needed.

For tree giveaway events you will want to share specific information on the best planting location for the tree species you are giving away. Show the recipient the tree comes with a card listing our website where they can register their tree and find more



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information about planting and care. Also be sure to request a donation for each tree given. (See below)

Plan a Reception Table/Area

- **Sign Up attendees** on the Tennessee Tree Project email list using the SIGN UP SHEET*. Mailing list members will receive occasional emails concerning Tennessee Tree Project. You can also use a fishbowl to collect business cards and raffle off a free tree or other prize!
- **Ask for Donations.** Your efforts in raising money for Tennessee Environmental Council will help to offset program costs, and keep the program “branching out!” You may elect to charge each participant \$5-15 for a tree planting event (more if you offer food or entertainment, to help cover your costs). For tree giveaway events we recommend requesting a \$3/tree donation and offering a special of 5 trees for \$9.
- **Hang FREE TREE SIGNS*** in a prominent location.
- **Consider serving food and/or beverages.** Planting trees can work up a sweat. You might wish to provide water (be sure to offer recycling options for water bottles or cups) or other beverages or ask participants to bring water in a reusable container. You may also bring light snacks and/or secure a donation of food and/or beverages from a local restaurant or grocery store. Serving food allows you to ask for a larger donation for participation.
- **Consider offering entertainment and/or speakers:** A local band may be glad to perform at your event and/or a local environmental expert could talk about the importance of trees in the community. This could help increase attendance and make the event more memorable.

AFTER YOUR EVENT

Update your press release and follow up with any reporters that might write about the event successes. Be sure to update you own organization’s website. You can also send thank you notes and/or updates to participants via email and social networking.

Please complete the AFTER THE EVENT QUESTIONNAIRE* found on the toolkit at www.tectn.org/tree. This very important step will help us to improve our program for you and others who are hosting tree events in the community. Please send the following:

- Any pictures from your event
- Donations for trees (unless pre-paid)
- A copy of the sign up sheet/registration

You can email all of this to tec@tectn.org or mail to: Tennessee Environmental Council, Attn: TN Tree Project, One Vantage Way Suite E-250, Nashville, TN 32228.