



# Trees

Because Arbor Day falls on April 24, and Earth Day is April 22, this month is a great time to talk about both sustainability and trees! Luckily, the two are related. Trees are tied to sustainability in a LOT of ways: they protect against climate change, keep air fresher and reduce pollution, support other living organisms, and provide shade, which can even help reduce energy use. Trees are vital parts of ecosystems, but deforestation and new development has destroyed many trees. Educating students about the benefits of trees is a great way to help reemphasize their importance in the natural as well as built world. The activities below are organized by grade level but may be applicable across ages.

## Activity Ideas

### Pre-School + Kindergarten

- **Tree activity sheets.** Talk to students about the many benefits of trees while they color ([here](#)), complete connect-the-dots, etc. (see [here](#) for more).
- **Tree music video.** Watch [this fun music video](#) by the creator of the Muppets, which sings about the benefits of trees.

### Grades 1-3

- **Tree crafts.** Celebrate Arbor Day by having students hand-, sponge-, or finger-paint trees. Explain to them the importance of trees as part of the forest ecosystem (see Additional Resources for more on this).
- **Class tree.** Have students cut out green or tree-related pieces of magazines in the shape of leaves. (inspiration [here](#)). Place all the leaves up on a big tree trunk with branches. Use this activity to spark a discussion about the [benefits](#) of trees and how trees work together with the world around them (just as the students have worked together to create this tree!).

### Grades 4-6

- **Trees of the world.** Explore the many different kinds of trees that grow all over the world using [this](#) interactive map.
- **Trees in the modern world.** Watch [this video](#) about the trouble with trees and what humans can do.

### Grades 7-12

- **Talking trees.** Watch [this video](#) to learn about how trees form complex networks and communicate with each other through symbiotic relationships with fungi.
- **Drones and trees.** [This video](#) shows how some entrepreneurs are working to solve the problem of deforestation by planting trees using drones. A great way to show students who are looking ahead to their careers that they can use their creativity to address sustainability issues.

## Videos and Additional Resources

1. [TedTalk](#) about giant trees
2. [Science Friday](#) video on the durability of trees
3. [Arbor Day Foundation website](#) with a variety of resources about trees for students ([Junior Arborist quiz](#))
4. [Toms of Maine: The Importance of Trees for Kids](#)
5. [Benefits of Trees in Cities](#)

## Let Us Know What You Did!

Report your progress and earn recognition for your school. Fill out your school's row in the [GSC Tracking Document](#) to let us know which activity you did for this month!

## Questions?

We're here to answer any questions you may have, talk through ideas or provide further resources. Just email [gogreen@kearneycats.com](mailto:gogreen@kearneycats.com).

### RECOGNITION LEVELS

All KPS schools have the opportunity to earn recognition for their participation in the Green Schools Initiative each year. The more activities you complete, the more recognition you receive! For 2019-2020, the following three levels of recognition are available:

- **Level 1 (Green Performance)** - Participation in 5 activities during the year. Schools receive a framed certificate of recognition, \$50 for Green Team Activities next year, and \$100 for the Principal's budget.
- **Level 2 (Green Achievement)** - Participation in 6 - 9 activities during the year. Schools receive \$150 for Green Team activities next year, an award banner, and \$200 for the Principal's budget
- **Level 3 (Green Excellence)** - Participation in 10 or more activities during the year. Schools receive \$300 for Green Team activities next year, a large award banner, and \$400 for the Principal's budget. In addition, all schools that achieve Level 3 participation are placed into a raffle; the selected school receives \$450 to spend on district-approved items. Approved items could entail smart power strips, vending machine energy misers, native landscaping/trees, rain barrels, native plants for classrooms, and indoor/outdoor recycling containers. All items must be approved by the district office prior to purchase.