



How to Recycle

Where to Recycle

Inspire & Motivate

Reading time: 2 mins

Earth Action: Plant a Tree



By **Gemma Alexander**

SEP 23, 2022 [earth action](#), [tree planting](#)



Earth911 is honoring the 52 years of Earth Day with 52 Actions for the Earth. Each week through Earth Day 2023, we will share an action you can take to [invest in the Earth](#) and make your own life more sustainable. Sometimes an action for the Earth is best broken down into steps. Before you plant a tree, you need to [make a plan](#). This week, you can invest in the Earth by planting the tree you planned last month.

Action: Plant a Tree

Impact of Trees

The 10 largest CO2-emitting companies in the United States would need to plant more than [2 billion trees each year](#) to offset their emissions. Your personal [carbon footprint](#) is much smaller, but it's still probably a lot more than planting [one tree](#) – or even a grove of trees – could offset. But every little bit helps, and trees offer many more benefits than just [carbon sequestration](#).

The list of [benefits](#) offered by trees is impressive. Trees are aesthetically pleasing in themselves; they also block unpleasant views and provide privacy; they improve mental and physical [health](#); they filter pollutants out of [stormwater](#) and

What Do You Think?

Are you considering moving because of climate change?

- Yes
- I'm researching my options to decide
- No

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[air](#); they provide shade to humans and [habitat](#) to wildlife; serve as windbreaks; and even improve [home values](#).

Successful Planting

But trees can only provide all these benefits if they survive after planting. That's why it's important to [plan ahead](#). Do some research on the [tree species](#) that are appropriate to your climate and to the specific site available. Proper [planting techniques](#) can make the difference between a dead tree and one that lives to absorb a ton of carbon. [Bareroot trees](#) are often more successful because they allow you to separate or trim circling roots before planting. Many people plant trees in holes that are too deep and too narrow; the trunk flare of a newly planted tree should be above the soil. Staking is often more harmful than helpful. But if the site is particularly windy, make sure not to stake too tightly – the tree should move in the wind – and remove the stakes after one year. Mulching with wood chips or compost will help maintain moisture and improve soil, but don't let mulch build up against the trunk.

When you plant trees in a disturbed environment like a suburban yard or an urban planting strip, long-term care is necessary. Even native trees require watering for the first few years, but if you've selected an appropriate species for your site, it probably needs [less pruning](#) than you think.

Support Tree Planting

Not everyone has a suitable location for planting a new tree. Maintaining existing trees is important, too – [a single mature tree](#) in bloom can support an entire beehive. You can also support tree planting initiatives in the places where trees are [most needed](#). Although it lacks the immediate satisfaction of a hands-on action for the Earth, supporting tree-planting initiatives like the [Canopy Project](#) can have a bigger environmental and social impact than planting your own tree.

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[Earth911 Inspiration: Autumn Is a Second Spring](#)



By [Gemma Alexander](#)

Gemma Alexander has an M.S. in urban horticulture and a backyard filled with native plants. After working in a genetics laboratory and at a landfill, she now writes about the environment, the arts and family. See more of her writing [here](#).

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