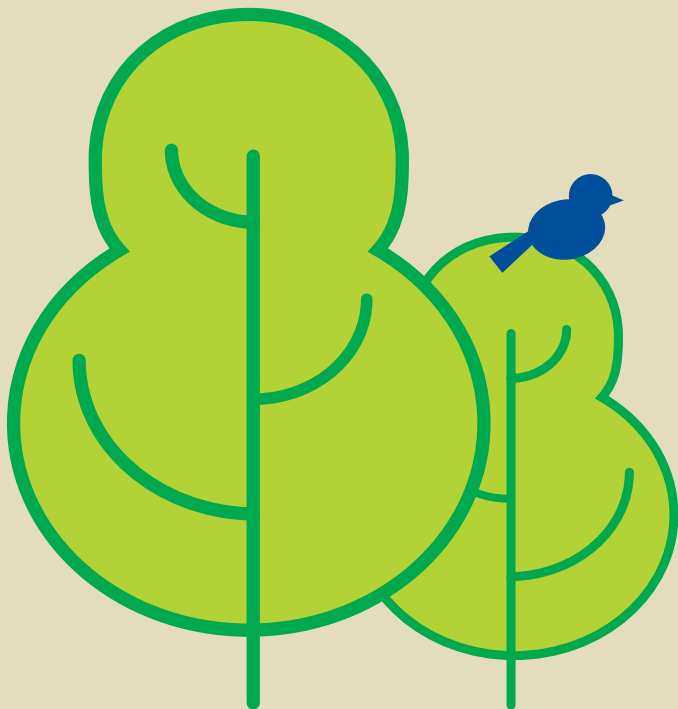


# Girl Scout Tree Promise™

Plant, Protect, and Honor  
5 Million Trees by 2026



**Program Toolkit**



# Girl Scout Tree Promise Toolkit

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# Girl Scout Tree Promise Overview

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## What is the Girl Scout Tree Promise?

Girl Scouts is joining forces with the [Elliott Wildlife Values Project](#), [American Forests](#), and [SciStarter](#) to launch a bold environmental and conservation initiative in April 2021. We're setting out to plant 5 million trees in five years and to protect and honor new and existing trees. Not only is this great for wildlife, it'll also provide climate change mitigation and benefit our communities.

Girl Scouts everywhere are being called to help by planting, protecting, and honoring trees in their backyards, camps, communities, and states—across the country and even across the world. From Daisy through Ambassador Girl Scouts to adult members and partners, every member and friend of the Movement is being asked to join. Five million trees is A LOT of trees, but TOGETHER we can do it!

## Why now?

As Earth's temperature rises due to climate change, the weather is becoming more extreme and unpredictable, causing big changes worldwide—polar ice caps melting, wildfires, hurricanes, droughts, and extreme heat and cold. Only a substantial reduction in carbon pollution and major efforts to pull carbon dioxide out of the atmosphere by 2030 will prevent even worse climate change consequences. Unless we take definitive action to defend our planet, over a million plant and animal species face extinction.

## Why trees?

Better environmental stewardship, especially reforestation and planting trees, can be one of the solutions to species loss and climate change. However, the need for trees is as urgent as ever. All over the world in parks and forests, climate change is damaging the ability of forests to grow back on their own. In cities, trees help cool

communities, reducing the heat island effect created by buildings, machines, and pavement that hold heat. Trees also provide beauty and food and enhance recreation.

Tree planting provides habitat for wildlife, creates shade on hot summer days, cleans water, and removes asthma-causing air pollution.

## Why 5 million?

- 5 million trees will provide habitat for wildlife and capture and store over 2 million metric tons of carbon dioxide over the next 50 years. This is equivalent to taking 425,000 cars off the road for a year, eliminating the annual carbon emissions from 239,000 homes, or not charging 255 billion smartphones
- Remove 1.6 million pounds of air pollutants per year—like dust, ozone, and particulate matter that can cause asthma and other respiratory problems. This is equivalent to removing 20,000 cars from the road every year
- Capture, store, and filter 1.5 billion gallons of water a year, enough to fill 2,340 Olympic-size swimming pools

Planting millions of new trees can amplify the impact of existing trees and forests, further cleaning the air, reducing greenhouse gases and pollution, preventing erosion, and providing wildlife habitats and beauty. When you protect the new trees and existing forests, all those trees can work their environmental magic. And the more people who value trees, the more people to plant and protect them. Honoring trees multiplies your effort to fight climate change.



## Why Girl Scouts?

Beginning in 1912 with our founder, Juliette Gordon Low, Girl Scouts have made a special place in their hearts for caring for the environment. The Girl Scout Promise and Law encourage us to “use resources wisely” and “to make the world a better place.” Girl Scouts have been, and continue to be, active in addressing the most important challenges facing our communities by speaking out and taking action—in ways both big and small.

Today, the majority of American teens feel afraid (57%) and angry (52%) about climate change but are also motivated to act.<sup>1</sup> Six in ten girls and young women are interested in being leaders through advocacy, public service, or a career as an elected official.<sup>2</sup> The world is changing rapidly with extreme weather events, so many girls fear—and rightly so—that they’ll inherit a diminished and unstable world. Girls around the world are making an impact, responding with school walkouts, mobilizing friends and family, and taking personal steps to reduce their carbon footprint.

Participating in the GSTP empowers girls to combat climate change and protect their futures in a very concrete way. In addition to the global implications of planting and protecting trees, girls can

experience the tangible benefits of trees in their own communities—like cleaner, cooler air— and develop their leadership and organizational skills.

## What can you do?

Each of us brings different knowledge, skills, and passions to Girl Scouts—and because of that we have a variety of ways to help the Girl Scout Movement plant 5 million trees over the next five years and protect and honor the trees we already have! There are different levels of participation; look at the list of opportunities, decide what works best for you, and then go for it!

Find out more about the Girl Scout Tree Promise at [www.girlscouts.org/tree-promise](http://www.girlscouts.org/tree-promise).

**Note:** GSTP activities can be easily adapted to accommodate the need for social distancing. Whether meeting in person or virtually, at camp, or at home with their families, girls can plant, protect, and honor trees safely.

<sup>1</sup>Washington Post/Kaiser Family Foundation Survey, July 9–August 5, 2019.

<sup>2</sup>[Girl Scout Research Institute, A New Decade of Girls Leadership, 2020, page 8.](#)



# Girl Scout Tree Promise: Program Toolkit

## Protect the Planet with the GSTP Patch

The Girl Scout Tree Promise (GSTP) provides Girl Scouts with an opportunity to act as environmental stewards and work to slow climate change on a national platform. It invites every Girl Scout and friend of the Movement to help plant 5 million trees in five years while protecting and honoring many more.

To participate in the GSTP patch, girls:

1. **Take the Girl Scout Tree Promise**
2. **Plant, protect, or honor trees**

You can purchase the patch from the [Girl Scout Shop](#).

Through the GSTP, girls explore how planting and protecting trees benefits their own communities by cleaning the air, cooling neighborhoods, and preventing erosion while also providing shade, places for animals to live, food for us to eat, and natural beauty for our communities. Honoring trees gives girls the chance to share their new knowledge, building community support for tree planting and awareness about ways to slow climate change.

As girls participate, make sure to keep the project girl-led. Girls may want to work on activities at events, in troop meetings, on their own, or with their families, caregivers, and friends. They might take part in their backyard, at their camp, or in their community. Wherever and however they do it, girls will be joining others across the country and around the globe to protect the planet.

This toolkit includes patch activities that troop leaders, councils, partners, and families can use to encourage girls' interest in tree planting, climate change, and biodiversity. It also includes ideas

and ways to connect the GSTP to other Girl Scout experiences, including badges and Journeys, Take Action and highest award projects, other awards, and travel opportunities.

*American Forests is GSUSA's subject matter expert for the Girl Scout Tree Promise. American Forests has been working longer—since 1875—than any national nonprofit conservation organization in the United States to protect and restore the country's forests. For more information on American Forests, check out their [website](#).*

## GSTP Events

If your girl(s) want to attend an event:

- Contact your council for any upcoming council events and find out if there are any nearby American Forests/GSUSA Signature Events
- Find nearby and virtual events about tree planting and climate change, hosted by planting, environmental, or other community organizations
- Host your own. Check out the **Host a Tree-Planting Event Guide** for more information, including a sample timeline and budget



# GSTP Patch Activities

Below are just a few ideas for activities and resources to get started. Use them as a guide, but also brainstorm other ideas with your girl(s). Our list includes ideas for girls of all ages, but you'll know best which activities and discussions will work best for your girls' age level and interests.

**Note:** The activities can be easily adapted to accommodate the need for social distancing. Whether meeting in person or virtually, at camp or at home with their families, girls can plant, protect, and honor trees safely. Please check your council's guidelines to confirm your project is in compliance with your local requirements.

## Step 1: Take the Girl Scout Tree Promise

Before planting, protecting, or honoring trees, girls need to find out how trees help the environment. By exploring the subject, girls will be better equipped to act as environmental stewards who can make a difference.

To get started, check out the **Power of One Tree** handout and share how awesome and important trees are! Then, girls can explore trees in their favorite outdoor spaces, like their backyard, camp, community, or state park. For example:

- **Develop your tree dictionary.** Words like “deciduous” and “greenhouse gases” might be unfamiliar to the girls. Help girls create a list of words they've learned related to trees and climate change.
- **Observe nature.** Relax in a hammock or on the ground and watch the leaves and branches move in the wind. If the timing is right, watch the sun set, the moon and stars come up, or the sun rise by looking into the trees. When looking up, notice

the phenomenon of “crown shyness” or how trees seem to grow in a way that their branches don't overlap.

- **Get moving.** Play games such as hug a tree, tree bingo, and tree tag or spend time playing in a treehouse. High-adventure seekers might even want to try recreational tree climbing or canopy ziplining to see trees from a new perspective.
- **Make and create.** Read, write, draw, or do art projects (such as leaf rubbings, leaf murals, or wire and clay sculptures of the tree) next to a tree without the distractions of phones or music.
- **Imagine a world without trees.** Name a few foods or gather samples of foods from trees like chocolate, lemons, cinnamon, olives, apples or other fruits, maple syrup, coffee, avocado, cloves or coconut. Ask if girls knew that all of these foods come from trees. Discuss how the world would be different without these and other trees. Then, expand the discussion to talk about the other things trees provide like habitats, fresh air, erosion protection, and natural beauty.
- **Investigate how trees support biodiversity.** Invite the girls to investigate the ways trees near them or around the world are home and food for all kinds of creatures. For example, some plants, like Spanish moss or certain mushrooms, grow on trees. Bees, birds, and other animals nest in them; tree sloths spend nearly all their lives in trees. Old and decaying trees are important for insects



and fungi. Trees, when carefully harvested, provide wood for human houses all over the world.

Finally, girls can take the Girl Scout Tree Promise and commit to building a better future with trees! They can sign on with the **Make the Girl Scout Tree Promise** handout, sharing their commitment with the promise to the right:

### THE TREE PROMISE

I promise to be a friend to every tree,  
just like they're a friend to me.

I will plant and protect them through and  
through  
with the help of my loyal Girl Scout crew.

Besides being beautiful, there's more to see;  
for climate change, they hold a key.

They fill our lungs with cleaner air;  
it's our responsibility to care.

That's why I'll advocate for every tree.  
Because I need them, and they need me!

### What happens when there aren't enough trees?

When places suffer from the lack of trees or their destruction, so do people. It's often people living in poverty, people of color, or marginalized groups, like Indigenous people, who feel the biggest impact from a lack of trees. Working to plant or protect trees helps the earth, but it helps create tree equity, too. That means that every neighborhood or place has enough trees that everyone can experience trees' benefits.

**Heat islands:** Neighborhoods in cities with few trees create "heat islands." Without trees to provide shade and cool air, the buildings, pavement, and machines in these neighborhoods hold and generate heat, creating pockets of excessive heat. The lack of trees also means more pollution and dirtier air. The increase in temperature and dirty air are dangerous to peoples' health. Neighborhoods with fewer trees tend to be places where people of color or people with low incomes live.

**Floods and mudslides:** Trees help clean and cool the air, but they also help prevent or lessen natural disasters. When it rains, trees slow down the flow of water by absorbing it through their roots and holding soil in place. Rural areas that lack enough trees can experience serious flooding and landslides.

**Loss of homes, medicines, and clean air:** Rain forests are home to half the plants and animals in the world, and 90 percent of the world's birds. They're also home to plants that are needed to make medicines and to all kinds of foods. Rain forests are the "lungs of the world," creating 20 percent of the earth's oxygen and absorbing carbon that contributes to climate change. Rain forests are also home to millions of Indigenous people who have lived in the forests for thousands of years. Rain forests all over the world are being destroyed by growing populations that need more space and by businesses and governments cutting down trees to harvest wood, create big plantations for crops, and build hydroelectric dams.

## Step 2: Plant, protect, or honor trees

Once girls understand the importance of trees, they're ready to plant, protect, and honor them!

### Option 1: Plant Trees

Planting trees may seem like a little thing, but it has a huge impact. And it's a powerful thing anyone can do to combat climate change.

Girls can plant trees by:

- Attending a council event or nearby American Forests/GSUSA Signature Event
- Attending an event hosted by a local planting organization or community group
- Sponsoring trees by raising money to donate to an organization, such as American Forests, that plants trees in areas where they will have the most impact
- Hosting their own tree planting with the support of their community, troop, and/or family. Check out the **Host a Tree-Planting Event Guide** for more information.

To get started, check out the **Tree Planting** handout and help girls answer the questions on page 1. By doing this, they'll learn about trees in their area and find out how to properly plant trees. And, if you or your girls are hosting your own tree planting, check out the planting tip below for ideas to connect with local tree partners.

**Note: Participating in or hosting a tree-planting event is doable when social distancing is necessary—it just requires extra planning.** Coordinate with participating groups about ways to set up the event outdoors with plenty of space. Create a timeline for the event that lists who does what when so that each participating group can do their part without having to get too close to another. Have the girls make signs or markers showing people where to stand. Include masks, hand sanitizer, and signage in your budget. And, most importantly, pay attention to and follow public health guidelines about the size of gatherings. If necessary, you can invite a larger group of people to participate and celebrate your tree planting virtually by using a video conferencing app.

After girls plant the tree(s), make sure to log the data on the Girl Scout Tree Promise Tracker [available in English and Spanish](#). Girls (or you on behalf of your girls if they are under age 13) **MUST** log their tree-planting data for every tree they plant. After logging the data, you'll also be emailed a link to purchase the patch.

Girls also need to find out how to care for and maintain any trees they plant. Discuss with girls how you'll make sure any trees planted will be cared for.

- **Newly planted trees need to be cared for to make sure they thrive!** After planting, trees need to be watered every 7–10 days, more often in the summer. Other tasks (such as delimiting, weeding,





mulching, pruning, and fertilizing) need to be performed once every two weeks from March to October, and as needed the rest of the year.

- **If you or the girls will be responsible for the post-planting care**, use the **Schedule for Tree Maintenance & Care** to create a plan and pledge to care for the tree. Then, work with the girls to follow through with that care.

- **If someone else will be caring for the trees**, share the Schedule for Tree Maintenance & Care. If the girls aren't needed for post-planting care, plan a visit with them back to the area, if possible, to check on the trees to see how they're doing.

## **Planting Tip: Connect with tree partners**

Whether you need a recommendation for which tree species to plant or a connection with your state park, tree partners can help! Local and state agencies as well as other tree-planting organizations are invaluable resources that can provide you with information and advice, supplies and resources for events. They can also connect you with other groups interested in tree planting.

### **Local resources to assist with tree planting:**

- **Local Tree-Planting Organizations:** These organizations specialize in tree planting and should be your first stop for information about tree-planting events, resources, and technical assistance.
- **Local Nurseries:** Nurseries raise and sell trees and other plants. They're excellent sources for advice on which trees to plant in your community, and they can grow and provide trees for your planting projects—especially useful if you're planning to plant in your own yard or other privately owned properties.
- **Local Government:** Call your city council or mayor's office to find out more about tree planting.
- **Trees Near You Directory:** Use the directory on the GSTP website to connect with local tree-planting partners.

### **State resources to assist with tree planting:**

- **State Forester:** The State Forester is the head forestry official in your state. Every state has a network of foresters who help groups like yours when planting trees. Many state forestry agencies also run tree nurseries where you can buy tree seedlings for your events.
- **State Urban and Community Tree Coordinator:** State Urban and Community Tree Coordinators are like State Foresters—they're specialists who can provide support and expertise to help you plant and care for trees in your community.
- **Conservation Districts:** Conservation District employees are focused on local conservation issues and provide expertise on the stewardship and conservation of soil, water, forests, and wildlife. They can help connect you with resources in your local community.

## Option 2: Protect Trees

Trees need protection to thrive—if they're threatened, they can't just move somewhere else. Protecting existing trees, and trees that have just been planted, from invasive species, illness, habitat loss, or destruction is essential to their ability to combat climate change.

Girls can learn more about protecting trees and work to protect trees in their community, at a camp, or around the world by:

- **Taking on invasive species in your community.** Girls might research which plants and insects are invasive species in your area and find out why these species are harmful to trees and the entire ecosystem. Then, they might partner with a local organization to help remove invasive plants.
- **Completing a citizen science project through SciStarter.** Girls might participate in a citizen science project and collect data to help scientists with tree and climate research as part of the [Girl Scout Tree Promise on SciStarter](#). You can find a full list of tree-related citizen science projects on the SciStarter site at <https://scistarter.org/girlscouts-trees>.
- **Engaging elected officials in tree protection.** Girls might identify any local ordinances or state laws your community has regarding tree protection and connect with elected officials through a letter, email, call, or visit. Then, girls can share with the official why they feel protecting trees is important to your community and/or state.
- **Connecting with others to protect trees in their community.** Girls might seek out community groups and organizations already working on tree protection in your

community. They might find out more about the projects they're working on and see if there are any ways to support them. They might even find potential groups to work with by looking for tree identification tags along commercial sidewalks, in parks, along walking trails, and other places.

- **Supporting global tree protection efforts.** Trees are in danger all over the world. Drought, erosion, harvesting for fuel, and logging are examples of threats to forests. Girls might research areas around the world where trees are threatened and connect with organizations working to protect them. They might then raise awareness in your community about the global threat to trees and what people can do locally to help.

## Option 3: Honor Trees

Honoring trees is a great way to raise awareness about the important role they play in our environment, communities, and history. By learning about and honoring the trees in their area, girls are creating a relationship with them. By raising awareness in the community, they are protecting trees and encouraging others to protect trees, too.

Girls can honor trees in their communities, at a camp, or around the world by:

- **Identifying trees.** If girls are interested in learning more about trees, find a citizen science project on the [Girl Scout Tree Promise on SciStarter](#). Or, help girls find a tree identification guidebook (or download a tree identification app), head outside to a park or trail, and practice identifying trees in your area.
- **Sharing a special tree's story.** Girls might honor a special tree in their



favorite outdoor space, a very old tree, trees with a historical connection to the area, trees with a unique shape/twist/bend, or anything else that makes the tree unique. Girls might share a story about a tree they have a special connection with, such as the first tree they climbed or camped out under. Girls can share the tree's story through photography, drawings, videos, poems, stories, news articles, or community social media pages.

- **Exploring “poet-tree.”** People have been writing poems to honor trees since ancient times. Share your favorite poems about trees or have the girls research poems honoring trees. Writing their own poems honoring trees is another great way to learn about trees and different forms of poetry, like acrostics or odes.
- **Doing some tree math.** Calculate how old a tree was by counting the rings in a cross section of the trunk or measuring the circumference of the trunk. Or figure out how tall a tree is by using shadows. Calculating the height or age of trees can help girls honor old or tall trees in their communities.

- **Honoring big trees.** Girls may want to check out American Forests' [National Register of Champion Trees](#). Then they can nominate trees they know or try to locate a champion tree in one of their favorite outdoor spaces, such as their yard, neighborhood, camp, or state park!
- **Discovering trees' special role across cultures.** All around the world, communities have been honoring special trees throughout history. Indigenous Peoples have used and honored certain kinds of trees for housing, transportation, and even healing. Some cultures even have festivals to honor certain trees. For example, cherry trees are honored in the spring with cherry blossom festivals. Encourage the girls to pick a kind of tree, a place, or a community and explore how they honor their trees.

### **Congratulations!**

Once girls make the Girl Scout Tree Promise and complete one activity from “Plant,” “Protect,” or “Honor,” you can purchase the patch from the [Girl Scout Shop](#).



# Connecting the GSTP with Other Girl Scout Programs

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Girls can connect the GSTP to other badges, Journeys, and awards, enhancing their experience. This section includes a list of badges and Journeys related to the GSTP, ideas for Take Action and highest award projects, and ideas for girls to continue learning about the importance of trees.

## Badges and Journeys

One easy way to connect the GSTP to other Girl Scout programs is with the Think Like a Citizen Scientist Journey, available for each level, Daisy through Ambassador. Girl Scout volunteers can find full meeting plans on the Volunteer Toolkit (VTK), and girls can download the Journey for free on the [Girl Scout Shop](#).

The GSTP also connects with other Girl Scout Journeys and badges that focus on STEM, outdoors, and advocacy. For example:

- **Daisy:** Between Earth and Sky Journey, Daisy Outdoor Journey, Welcome to the Daisy Flower Garden Journey, Rosie Petal, Clover Petal, Eco Learner Badge
- **Brownie:** WOW! Wonders of Water Journey, Brownie Outdoor Journey, Eco Friend badge, Bugs badge, Outdoor Adventurer badge
- **Junior:** Junior Outdoor Journey, Eco Camper badge, Animal Habitats badge, Flowers badge, Gardener badge
- **Cadette:** Breathe Journey, Cadette Outdoor Journey, Eco Trekker badge, Trees badge
- **Senior:** Sow What? Journey, Senior Outdoor Journey, Eco Explorer badge
- **Ambassador:** Justice Journey, Ambassador Outdoor Journey, Your Voice, Your World Journey, Eco Advocate badge, Water badge

Girls may also find ways to connect other badges, Journeys, and experiences with the GSTP. For example, they may want to use troop proceeds from the Girl Scout Cookie Program to purchase tree-planting supplies or seedlings. When they earn their [Cookie Business badges](#), encourage them to think about how they will incorporate their Girl Scout Tree Promise goals into their cookie business plans.

Find out more about Girl Scout badges and Journeys with [Award & Badge Explorer](#).

## Take Action and Highest Awards

One of the easiest ways girls can amplify what they've already done is through a Take Action or [highest awards](#) (Bronze, Silver, Gold) project. In each of these awards, girls have the chance to create a sustainable project that solves a problem and makes a difference in the world. After working on the GSTP, girls may want to create projects related to climate change, how trees can help lessen climate change, or how they make a sustainable difference for our planet.

Here is a list of projects Girl Scouts have done that could relate to the GSTP. They can be thought-starters for girls to brainstorm and develop their own projects.

- **Take Action Project:** A troop of Girl Scout Daisies from New Mexico visited a nursery to learn about plants and how important they are to the environment. Then, the girls used a portion of their cookie earnings to purchase a tree and four bushes to plant in front of their school.
- **Bronze Award:** Three Juniors from West Central Florida created a garden in a space that used



to house their community playground. They gathered support from their parents and church community and partnered with a local business to secure plants for the garden. Then, they worked many hours to build and grow the garden.

- **Silver Award:** Five Cadettes from Greater Los Angeles educated young children about global warming. They partnered with two schools to plant drought-resistant plants and trees on Earth Day and asked for continued care of the plants from the schools' maintenance crews. They taught students about global warming (with child-friendly tips on how to reduce carbon pollution!), recycling, habitats, carbon footprints, and acid rain. They left lesson plans for teachers to continue to use. They also created and distributed posters and brochures to explain the purpose of Earth Day and held two park cleanups.
- **Gold Award:** A Senior in Central Texas focused her Gold Award on the urban heat island effect. First, she evaluated five neighborhoods for places with room to plant trees. Then, she connected with homeowners to arrange for trees to be ordered, delivered, and planted. She succeeded in planting 500 trees through the project and partnered with a local nonprofit to continue caring for the trees for the next three years. She also publicized her project through various local news outlets, inviting others to join.

## Other Awards and Opportunities

Girls may also want to incorporate what they've learned through the GSTP into other Girl Scout programs or opportunities. Combining the GSTP with other Girl Scout activities can make the experience even more meaningful and effective.

### Community Service Bars and Torch Awards:

Cadettes, Seniors, and Ambassadors can earn

the Community Service Bar by volunteering for 20 hours with a local tree-planting organization. They can also earn the Silver and Gold Torch awards by completing a Journey and serving at least one term in a leadership position at their school, place of worship, or other organization, focusing their time on topics related to the Girl Scout Tree Promise.

**Global Action Award:** This award changes each year, so you'll need to check each year to see if the focus connects with the Girl Scout Tree Promise. For 2021, the focus is "Climate Action." By planting, protecting and honoring trees, the Girl Scout Tree Promise provides an avenue for girls to earn their Global Action award.

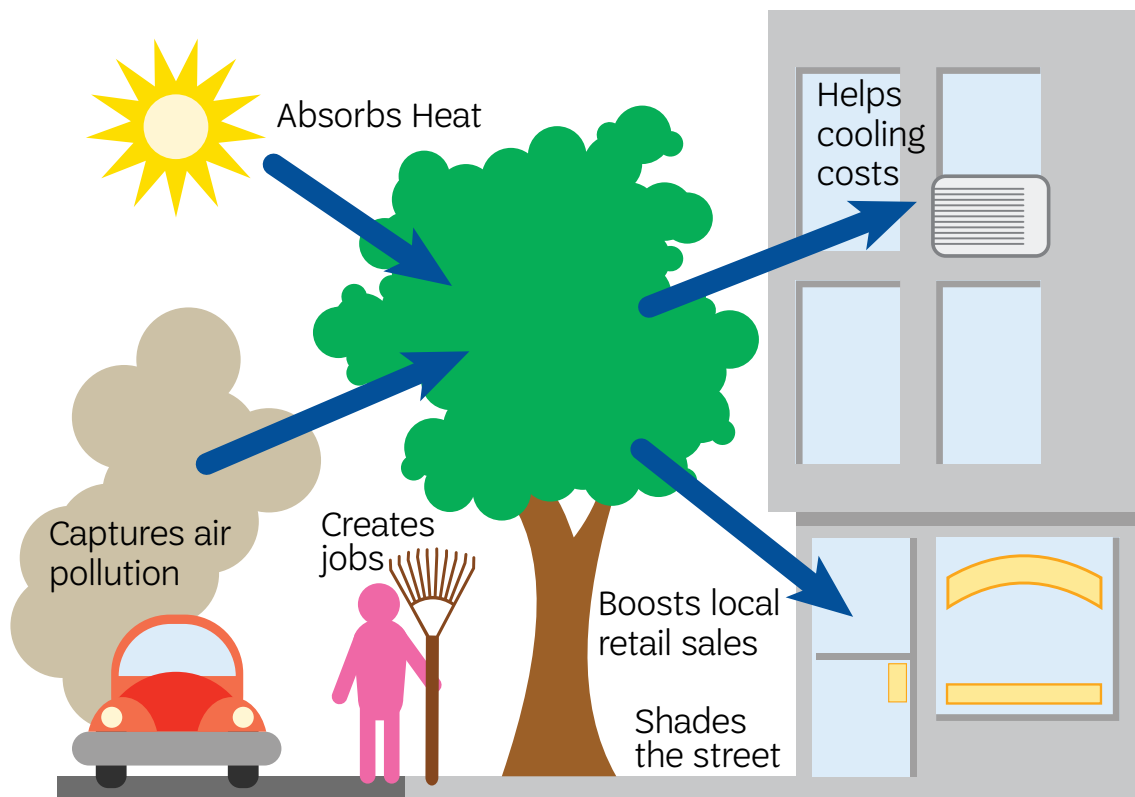
**My Promise, My Faith Pin:** Girls can work with a faith community to support the Girl Scout Tree Promise as they work on earning their pin (for Christian adherents, see tip below). Some faiths have teachings about environmental stewardship that girls could explore and share with their faith communities.

**Service-Learning Travel Opportunities:** Girls might want to travel across the country or the globe by participating in Girl Scout-sponsored travel programs ([Destinations](#) or council trips), [a troop trip](#), or a family vacation focused on service learning such as tree planting, climate change, or environmental stewardship.

### Tip for Christian partners and members:

Programs of Religious Activities with Youth (P.R.A.Y.) has developed an [RP3 Bible Basics](#) curriculum, "Great Trees," to accompany the GSTP and it can be earned by girls and adults of any age. The curriculum can be completed in approximately three hours and is available online for free. P.R.A.Y. has also created a discussion guide for girls earning their Girl Scout My Promise, My Faith Pin using the "Great Trees" curriculum.

# The Power of One Tree



## Water

- A tree can capture 10–40% of the rainfall it comes into contact with, depending on species, time of year, and amount of rain that falls in the storm.<sup>1</sup>
- Over the course of 20 years, a single red maple tree can intercept 27,000 gallons of rainwater, avoiding 4,800 gallons of runoff.<sup>2</sup>

## Climate

- A large tree absorbs 40–50 pounds of carbon dioxide—a greenhouse gas that causes global warming—per year.<sup>3</sup>
- Over the course of its life, a single tree can capture and store one ton of carbon dioxide.<sup>4</sup>

## Forest Products

- According to estimates calculated by the University of Maine, one tree can produce around 8,333 sheets of paper.<sup>5</sup> The average office worker uses 10,000 sheets of copy paper each year.<sup>6</sup>
- “An apple tree can yield up to 15–20 bushels of fruit per year and can be planted on the tiniest urban lot.”<sup>7</sup>

## People

- A single tree can capture 3.5 pounds of air pollutants—like ozone, dust and particulate matter—per year.<sup>8</sup> Air pollutants like fine particulate matter are a major cause of asthma and other respiratory problems.
- A mature tree can reduce peak summer temperatures by 2°–9°F.<sup>9</sup>
- “The net cooling effect of a young, healthy tree is equivalent to 10 room-size air conditioners operating 20 hours per day.”<sup>10</sup>
- “Trees absorb and block noise and reduce glare. A well-placed tree can reduce noise by as much as 40 percent.”<sup>11</sup>
- A single large tree can produce approximately 260 pounds of oxygen per year.<sup>12</sup>
- While lifespan varies by species and growing environment, trees generally live to be 50 to 300 years old.
- The tallest tree in the world is a Coast Redwood named Hyperion, growing in Northern California’s Redwood National Park. It’s 380 feet tall!<sup>13</sup>

### More general facts/facts about more than one tree:

- In one year, an acre of forest can absorb up to twice the carbon dioxide produced by the average car’s annual mileage.<sup>14</sup>
- Trees properly placed around buildings can reduce air conditioning costs by 50%.<sup>15</sup>
- Trees increase property value of your home by 10–20% and attract new home buyers.<sup>16</sup>
- Trees can reduce crime and improve perceptions of business districts.<sup>17</sup>
- One study showed that hospital patients whose rooms had a view of trees recovered more quickly and were less depressed than those looking out at a brick wall.<sup>18</sup>
- Students with trees outside school windows have higher test scores and graduation rates after controlling for other factors. High school students with more natural features like trees outside classroom and cafeteria windows showed higher standardized test scores, graduation rates, and intention to attend college, after controlling for socioeconomic status and other factors.<sup>19</sup>
- After a walk in the park or playing in green spaces, children with ADD displayed fewer symptoms.<sup>20</sup>
- Eight in ten species found on land—that’s over five million and counting—live in forests.<sup>21</sup>
- More than half of U.S. drinking water originates in forests. Over 180 million Americans in over 68,000 communities rely on forests to capture and filter their drinking water.<sup>22</sup>

*This content was provided by American Forests as a resource for the Girl Scout Tree Promise.*

<sup>1</sup><https://extension.psu.edu/the-role-of-trees-and-forests-in-healthy-watersheds>

<sup>2</sup><https://www.itreetools.org/>

<sup>3</sup><https://www.itreetools.org/>

<sup>4</sup><https://www.itreetools.org/>

<sup>5</sup><http://conservatree.org/learn/Enviroissues/TreeStats.shtml>

<sup>6</sup><https://www.pca.state.mn.us/quick-links/office-paper>

<sup>7</sup><https://www.treepeople.org/tree-benefits>

<sup>8</sup><https://www.nrpa.org/globalassets/research/nowak-heisler-research-paper.pdf>

<sup>9</sup><https://www.epa.gov/heat-islands/using-trees-and-vegetation-reduce-heat-islands>

<sup>10</sup><https://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/r9/home/?cid=STELPRD3832558>

<sup>11</sup>[https://www.taketwoenvironmental.com/how\\_trees\\_help\\_the\\_environment](https://www.taketwoenvironmental.com/how_trees_help_the_environment)

<sup>12</sup><https://www.thoughtco.com/how-much-oxygen-does-one-tree-produce-606785>

<sup>13</sup><https://www.livescience.com/28729-tallest-tree-in-world.html>

<sup>14</sup><https://www.itreetools.org/>

<sup>15</sup><https://ww3.arb.ca.gov/cc/capandtrade/protocols/forest%20old/ctcc.pdf>

<sup>16</sup><https://www.hgtv.com/design/real-estate/increase-your-homes-value-with-mature-trees>

<sup>17</sup>Wolf, Kathy. *Journal of Arboriculture* 29(3): May 2003 “Public Response to Urban Forest in Inner-City Business Districts”

<sup>18</sup><https://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2013/03/how-nature-resets-our-minds-and-bodies/274455/>

<sup>19</sup>Matsuoka, R. (2008). High school landscapes and student performance. Doctoral dissertation, University of Michigan.

<sup>20</sup>Faber Taylor, A. & Kuo, F. (2009). “Children with attention deficits concentrate better after walk in the park”. *Journal of Attention Disorders* 12(4).

<sup>21</sup><http://www.wri.org/blog/2015/05/forests-housing-rare-and-endangered-species-lost-12-million-hectares-trees-2001>

<sup>22</sup><https://www.fs.fed.us/managing-land/national-forests-grasslands/water-facts>



# Tree Planting

Planting trees may seem like a little thing, but it has a huge impact. And it's a powerful thing anyone can do to combat climate change.

**To get started, answer these questions to learn about trees in your area:**

- **Which types of trees are best for your area?** Research and identify which trees are “right” for your area. Make sure to also consider these characteristics:
  - **Mature form/purpose**—What will the mature tree look like? How big will it be? Will it bear fruit? Provide shade?
  - **Diversity, adaptability, native vs. non-native**—Is this kind of tree different from others in the area? Does it provide diversity? Is it a species native to the area or would you be bringing in an invasive species? How well will this kind of tree adapt to changing conditions?
  - **Size, age, and form of nursery stock**—How big and how old is the tree you want to plant? In what form will it come to you from the nursery? Is it a bare-root seedling, containerized seedling, containerized tree, or balled and burlapped tree?

You might also consider the climate, planting zone, soil quality, water, space, and sun exposure of your site when choosing the “right” tree.

- **How does planting trees here help the community?** Some places have lots of trees naturally, like rain forests, and some do not, like deserts. But other places lack trees, and their benefits, because of what people have done—like cutting down forests or building parts of cities without trees. Once you understand more about the trees near you, you can better learn how to help your community.
- **How does planting trees help support local biodiversity?** Trees can provide a place for animals and other plants to live. Maybe there are animals whose habitats have been destroyed. By planting the trees that can be used as homes, you support biodiversity.
- **Where will you plant the tree(s)?** To survive, trees need to be planted in the kind of soil and with the kind of light and water that their specific species needs. To benefit communities in other ways, they need to be carefully placed, too. For example, trees properly placed around buildings can reduce air conditioning costs by 50%.
- **What is the best time of year to plant?** Trees do best when planted during times of moderate temperature and rainfall, like spring or early fall. This gives the newly planted trees time to settle in before the first frost or summer heat.
- **How do you properly plant the tree(s) in the ground?** Follow the instructions in this handout to plant balled and burlapped trees, containerized trees, and bare-root seedlings.
  - **Bare-root seedlings (\$0.50–\$3.00):** They're small and lightweight. A bare-root seedling can fit in an adult's hand and be easily planted by one person.



- **Containerized seedlings (\$1.00–\$5.00):** They're small and lightweight. A containerized seedling can fit in an adult's hand and be easily planted by one person.
- **Containerized trees (\$75–\$250+):** They're large and very heavy. A containerized tree can take three or more adults to move to the planting hole.
- **Balled and burlapped trees (\$75–\$250+):** They're large and very heavy. A balled or burlapped tree can take three or more adults to move to the planting hole.

**After you plant the tree(s), make sure to log your data on the [Girl Scout Tree Promise Tracker](#).**

Girls (or you on behalf of the girls if they are under age 13) MUST log their tree-planting data for every tree planted.

**And don't forget to care for and maintain any trees you plant!** Newly planted trees need to be cared for to make sure they thrive. After planting, trees need to be watered every 7–10 days, more often in the summer. Other tasks (such as delimiting, weeding, mulching, pruning, and fertilizing) need to be performed once every two weeks from March to October and as needed the rest of the year.

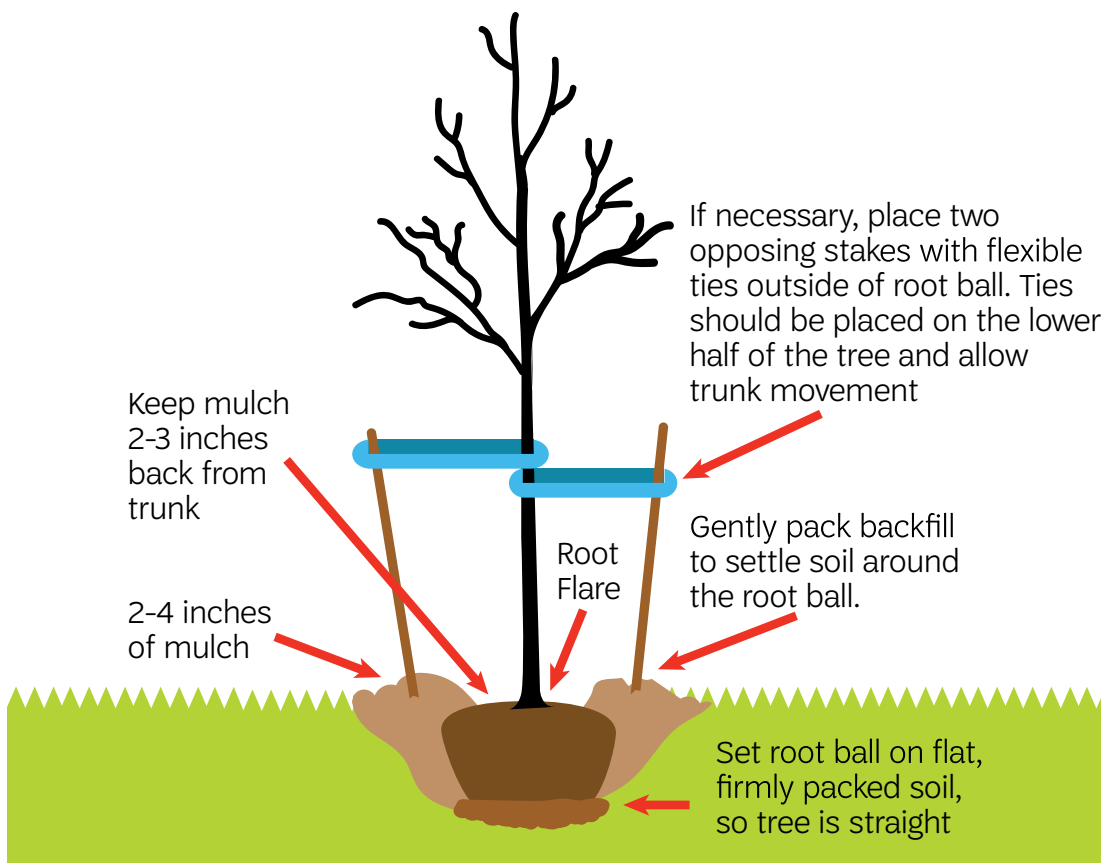
Use the **Schedule for Tree Maintenance & Care** to pledge to care for the tree(s), create a maintenance plan, and track the follow-through on that care.

*This content was provided by American Forests as a resource for the Girl Scout Tree Promise.*

## Balled and Burlapped Trees

**Important Note:** Always handle trees by the root ball.

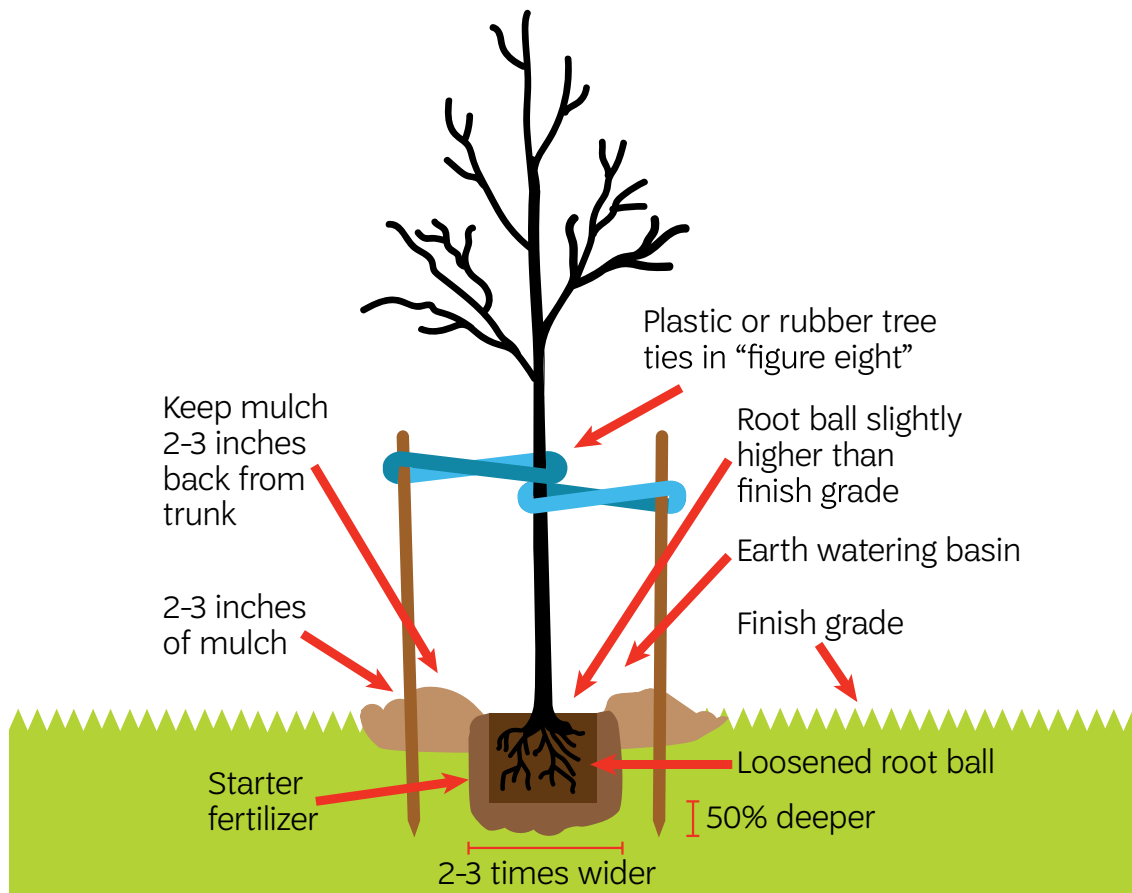
1. Gently lift and lower or roll the root ball into the hole. Position the tree in the center of the planting hole. The root collar—the trunk flare right above the root system—should be exposed and slightly above ground level. If the hole is too deep, add soil and tamp down to create a firm foundation beneath the root ball.
2. Cut away as much of the wire basket as possible without breaking the root ball. Cut and remove all twine and rope. Remove the staples holding the burlap together and peel the burlap back. Cut away any loose burlap. It is OK to leave any remaining burlap and wire under the root ball.
3. Fill the hole with soil. Lightly tamp the soil in around the roots to eliminate air pockets.
4. Remove tree tags, ribbons, or trunk wrapping.
5. Add about four inches of mulch (wood chips, ground bark, pine needles, or compost), keeping mulch four inches away from the trunk.
6. Water deeply.



## Containerized Trees

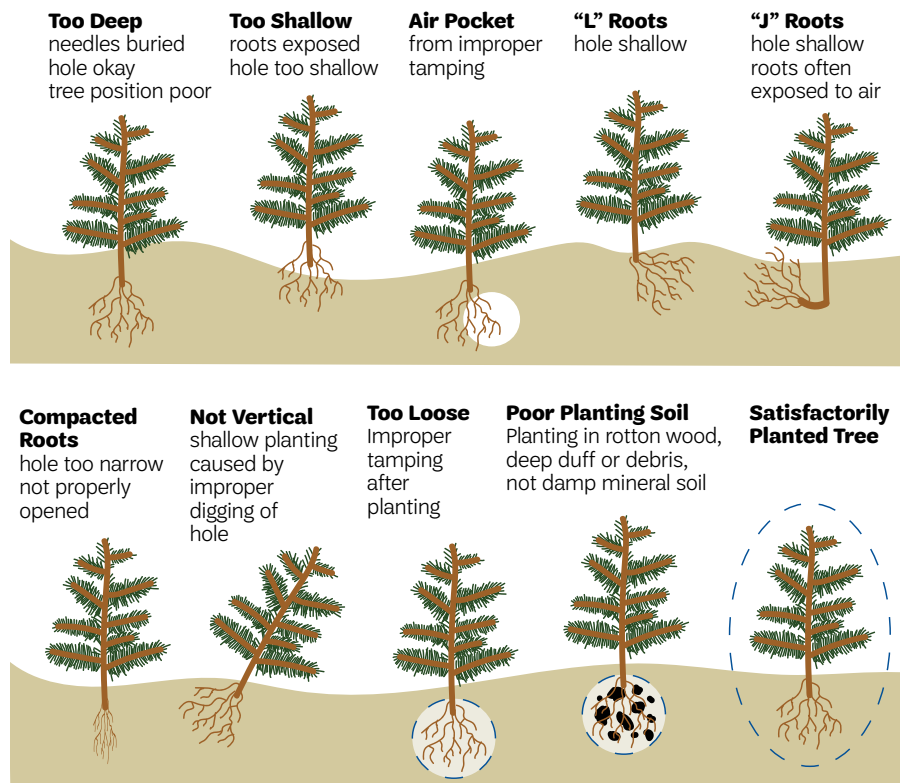
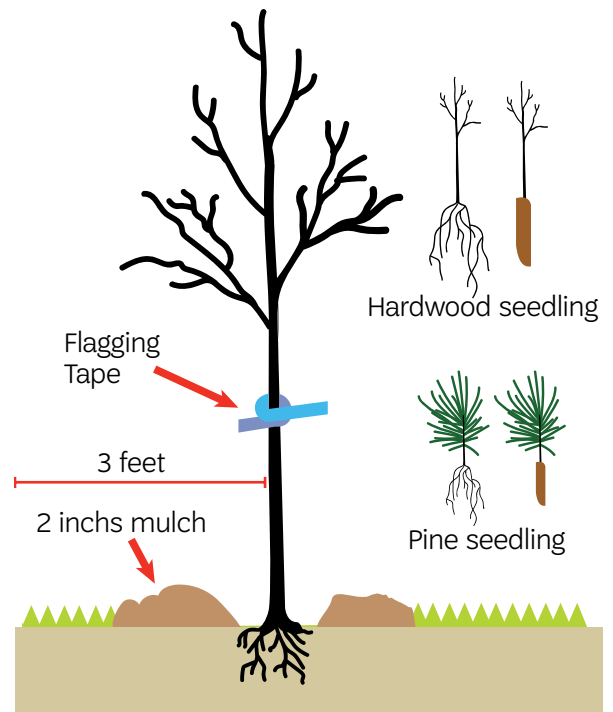
**Important Note:** Always handle trees by the container or root mass.

1. Firmly tamp around the outside of the container to separate the soil from the sides of the container.
2. Carefully remove the tree from the container.
3. Make four or five vertical (straight up and down) cuts along the side of the root mass with a sharp knife to sever circling roots.
4. Gently lift and lower or roll the root ball into the hole. Position the tree in the center of the planting hole. The root collar—the trunk flare right above the root system—should be exposed and slightly above ground level. If the hole is too deep, add soil and tamp down to create a firm foundation beneath the root ball.
5. Fill the hole with soil. Lightly tamp the soil in around the roots to eliminate air pockets.
6. Remove tree tags, ribbons, or trunk wrapping.
7. Add about four inches of mulch (wood chips, ground bark, pine needles, or compost), keeping mulch four inches away from the trunk. (Stake only if necessary due to high wind risk.)
8. Water deeply.



## Bare-root Seedlings

1. Prepare a planting area where the seedling will have adequate space to grow into a full-sized tree both above and below the ground. Avoid overhead and underground utilities.
2. Dig a hole about 2–3x wider than the seedling height and deep enough to accommodate the roots.
3. Remove any grass within a 3-foot circular area around the seedling.
4. Place the root collar (the place where the roots join the stem) at soil level.
5. Make sure that the roots stay straight and do not form a “J.”
6. Shovel in soil around the roots and tamp down lightly to remove air pockets. Use water to settle soil in the planting area. Construct a water-holding basin around the tree.
7. Spread a two- to three-inch layer of mulch (wood chips, ground bark, pine needles, or compost) over the planting hole, but not within six inches of the tree trunk. (Stake only if necessary due to high wind risk.)
8. Protect seedling from damage caused by feet, lawnmowers, pets, etc.



# MAKE THE GIRL SCOUT TREE PROMISE

## THE GIRL SCOUT TREE PROMISE

I promise to be a friend to every tree,  
just like they're a friend to me.

I will plant and protect them through and through  
with the help of my loyal Girl Scout crew.

Besides being beautiful, there's more to see;  
or climate change, they hold a key.

They fill our lungs with cleaner air;  
it's our responsibility to care.

That's why I'll advocate for every tree.  
Because I need them, and they need me!

---

*(Girl Scout's Name)*

---

*(Date)*

## Did you know trees are Mother Nature's

**superheroes?** Yep, think of trees as superheroes with powers unlike any other living thing on the planet!

## What type of superpowers are we talking

**about?** Well, just to name a few, trees help to:

- Take out pollution from the air we breathe and fill our lungs with oxygen
- Remove carbon from the atmosphere, helping slow global warming and climate change
- Lower our stress, making us happier
- Act like a strainer, keeping our drinking water cleaner
- Relieve us from the heat with their shady canopies
- Protect our homes from the heat and cold, saving us energy
- Create space for wildlife to live, eat, and play
- Protect the soil from the effects of heavy rain, preventing erosion
- Give us jobs so we can provide for our families
- Provide fruit and nuts for us to eat and support threatened pollinators like bees and hummingbirds

## So instead of wondering "Why trees?", we

**should be asking "Why not trees?!"** The more we plant, the more superheroes our planet will have!

I \_\_\_\_\_ took the  
*(Girl Scout's Name)*

Girl Scout Tree Promise on \_\_\_\_\_  
*(Date)*

# GSTP: Schedule for Tree Maintenance & Care

## Pledge to Care for Your New Trees:

I pledge to help care for the \_\_\_\_\_ tree(s) newly planted at  
*(species)*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*(address)*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*(signature)*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*(date)*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*(sponsoring organization)*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*(your phone)*



## Create a Maintenance and Care Schedule:

In the table below, indicate how many times each task should be completed in each month

### Your Tree’s Maintenance and Care Schedule

Tasks	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Delittering												
Watering												
Weeding												
Mulching												
Pruning												
Fertilizing												

Trees need to be watered every 7–10 days, more often in the summer. Other tasks (such as delittering, weeding, mulching, pruning, and fertilizing) need to be performed once every two weeks from March to October, and as needed the rest of the year. Each time, take “after” photos. This will help you to evaluate the sustainability of the trees.

#### To care for any trees, make sure to:

- Water deeply around trees once a week unless there has been sufficient rainfall.
- Refresh mulch annually.
- Remove ties and stakes after one to two years.



### Track Your Tree's Care and Maintenance:

Once you've created a schedule, use a similar table to track the dates you completed the tasks. Each time you complete a task, write the date in the corresponding box.

### Your Tree's Maintenance and Care Tracker

Tasks	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Delittering												
Watering												
Weeding												
Mulching												
Pruning												
Fertilizing												

This content was provided by [American Forests](#) as a resource for the Girl Scout Tree Promise.

# Host a Tree-Planting Event Guide

## Overview

This guide includes information to help you plan your own tree-planting event. Hosting a tree-planting event requires a considerable amount of time and resources. Girl Scouts are encouraged to connect with local tree-planting organizations and/or community partners to help lessen the workload associated with hosting a local tree-planting event.

The Girl Scout Tree Promise is not just about planting trees. Protecting and honoring trees are important components to the overall success of the initiative. You can host in-person or virtual events that protect and honor trees, too.

*The timeline and content in this guide were provided by [American Forests](#) as a resource for the Girl Scout Tree Promise.*

**Participating in or hosting a GSTP event is doable when social distancing is necessary—it just requires extra planning.** Coordinate with participating groups about ways to set up the event outdoors with plenty of space. Create a timeline for the event that lists who does what when so that each participating group can do their part without having to get too close to another. Have the girls make signs or markers showing people where to stand. Include masks, hand sanitizer, and signage in your budget. And, most importantly, pay attention to and follow public health guidelines about the size of gatherings. If necessary, invite a larger group of people to participate and celebrate your tree planting virtually by using a video conferencing app.



## At a Glance: Timeline for Hosting a Tree-Planting Event

<b>6+ MONTHS BEFORE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Determine why and where you want to plant.</li><li>● Identify who needs to be involved.</li><li>● Organize a planning team.</li><li>● Set a date for the event.</li></ul>
<b>6 MONTHS BEFORE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Select a site.</li><li>● Get permission and permits.</li><li>● Select tree species.</li></ul>
<b>5 MONTHS BEFORE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Analyze needs and costs.</li><li>● Raise funds.</li><li>● Recruit girls and participants</li></ul>
<b>3 MONTHS BEFORE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Create the agenda for your event.</li><li>● Order trees and supplies.</li><li>● Invite media participation.</li><li>● Plan social media promotion.</li></ul>
<b>2 MONTHS BEFORE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Prepare the site.</li></ul>
<b>DAY OF THE EVENT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Assemble equipment and supplies.</li><li>● Instruct participants and demonstrate proper planting.</li><li>● Take photos during the event.</li></ul>
<b>AFTER THE EVENT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Log your trees in the <a href="#">Girl Scout Tree Promise Tracker</a>.</li><li>● Schedule routine maintenance and care.</li><li>● Celebrate girls and others who helped.</li><li>● Share the story and impact of your event on social media.</li><li>● Evaluate the event.</li></ul>

# Step-by-Step Guide to Hosting a Tree-Planting Event

## 6+ MONTHS BEFORE THE EVENT

### 1. Determine why and where you want to plant.

Once you know why you want to host a tree-planting event, start by identifying your goals and brainstorming ideas for places you can plant trees. For example, you might consider public lands, city/county/state parks, Girl Scout–owned camp properties, national forests, streets and parking lots, vacant lots, grounds of houses of worship or other community partners, or back/front yards.

Then, decide why and where you are going to plant your tree. Will your tree provide shade to a playground or beauty to a courtyard? Will it slow down storm water? Does the city have a Tree Plan that you can use as a blueprint? Does a nearby school have a planting or landscape plan and can your trees be incorporated into it?

You may also want to plant a tree in memory of someone who has passed or to honor someone important to girls or their community, like a sister Girl Scout, family member, friend, role model, public servant, troop leader, or house of worship leader. If possible, have the honoree attend the tree-planting event.

### 2. Identify who needs to be involved.

Once you decide where to hold your planting, you'll need to involve anyone your planting might affect.

For example, consider whose permission you need and whose support you want or need. Depending on the type of project you select, this may include city, county, or state officials; technical advisors; other youth groups; school officials; local businesses; neighborhood associations; faith or other community partners; local environmental groups; local utilities; or businesses.

As you begin planning, volunteers, families, or partners might also have resources or connections to share, like those with a nursery, the county conservation department, a landscaping company, a local faith group, or a piece of property. So make sure to talk to or survey your network to find out about their possible tree connections!

### 3. Organize a planning team.

Then, it's time to start planning the details of your event. You'll need people to attend to specific event items, such as:

- **Project design:** Selecting site and species, analyzing needs and costs, permitting, and site preparation
- **Fundraising:** Developing and carrying out plans for raising money, soliciting in-kind donations, and thanking donors
- **Acquisition:** Ordering trees and supplies and borrowing tools
- **Participant coordination:** Recruiting, organizing, tracking, training, and thanking girls and others who participated in the event



- **Public relations:** Informing the media of activities and events, including announcements on social media, emails, bulletins, and other channels, and also asking partners to promote through their own channels.
- **Event coordination:** Scheduling the event, planning the day’s activities, coordinating the participants’ work, instructing participants in proper planting, and scheduling routine maintenance and care

#### 4. Set a date.

Set your event date for spring or early fall. This is important, as trees do best when planted during times of moderate temperature and rainfall. This gives the newly planted trees time to settle in before the first frost or summer heat.

Days to Consider for Tree Plantings	
LATE WINTER	<p><b>March 8:</b> International Women’s Day</p> <p><b>Week of March 12:</b> Girl Scout Week and Girl Scouts Celebrate Faith</p> <p><b>March 21:</b> International Day of Forests</p>
SPRING	<p><b>April:</b> Citizen Science Month, GS Volunteer Appreciation Month</p> <p><b>April 1:</b> Wangari Maathai’s birthday</p> <p><b>April 22:</b> Earth Day</p> <p><b>Last Friday in April:</b> Arbor Day; however, many states observe Arbor Day on different dates throughout the year based on when the best planting times are in their area.</p> <p><b>May 27:</b> Rachel Carson’s birthday</p>
FALL	<p><b>October 11:</b> International Day of the Girl</p>
VARIOUS TIMES THROUGHOUT THE YEAR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Service days</li> <li>● Climate action advocacy</li> <li>● Faith holidays</li> </ul>
<p><b>TIP:</b> Check to see if the day falls in line with the recommended planting time for that tree species, as the days listed here might not work for some tree species and/or geographic areas.</p>	

## 6 MONTHS BEFORE THE EVENT

### 1. Select a site.

Now that you've decided where you want to hold your event, select a more specific site with enough room for your trees' roots and branches to reach full size. Avoid overhead and underground utilities.

When choosing your site, consider the logistics of a planting event, such as:

- Is the site easily accessible?
- Is there room for your group to park?
- Are there restrooms nearby?
- Is the site visible and easy to find?
- Are there any hazards, like poison ivy or poison oak, steep slopes, or broken glass that might make the project a danger to your group?

### 2. Get permission and permits.

**If you're planting on public property, local government will have a permit process for planting trees.**

**If you're planting on private property,** private landowners will need to provide permission. After you get permission from the landowners, have them sign an agreement that they want the trees and will care for them. Check out the **Tree Care Pledge** found in the "Program Toolkit Resources" section of the **Program Toolkit** for more.

### 3. Select tree species.

You may want to reach out to local experts to support you in selecting tree species for your event. If you need help finding a nursery, check out the [Trees Near You Directory](#) to find one in your state.

**First, choose your nursery.** Visit several nurseries in your area to check each nursery's prices, quality, and stock. Ask the staff which trees do well in the area and get recommendations for your specific site and event.

**Then, choose the "right" tree for your site and event.** With support from your nursery, decide which tree species you'll plant at your event. When choosing the "right" tree, make sure to consider these characteristics of the tree species:

- Mature form/purpose
- Spacing
- Diversity
- Adaptability
- Native vs. non-native
- Size, age, and form of nursery stock

You might also consider the climate, planting zone, soil quality, water, space, and sun exposure of your site when choosing the “right” tree.

**If you’re planning your planting around your home, choose a tree species that helps to conserve energy.** Planting trees around your home will conserve energy and lower the cost of utility bills. Three well-placed deciduous (leaf-losing) trees on the east, south, and west sides of a home will shade it from summer sun and lower cooling costs by ten to fifty percent. For trees you plant around your home, make sure the site has shade from the sun in the summer and protection from wind in the winter.

## 5 MONTHS BEFORE THE EVENT

### 1. Analyze needs and costs.

Review the **Sample Budget Worksheet** in the “Additional Resources” section of this guide for a list of tools and planting supplies, publicity items, girl and other participant supplies, and trees. Identify what you have, what resources are available, and what you’ll have to purchase.

### 2. Raise funds.

Once you know what you need to make your event a success, you may want to organize a fundraising event. Consider asking agencies and companies to donate services, supplies, and/or assistance for the event.

### 3. Recruit girls and other participants.

Depending on the size of your event and site, you may choose to invite your troop, their families, or your wider community. Here are some ideas for ways you can recruit girls and other participants to join your planting event:

- Ask your troop, service unit, and council to promote and invite other Girl Scouts to attend.
- Post your event on social media or in a local newspaper.
- Seek out service groups, schools, houses of worship, or businesses that might be interested in supporting or attending the event. Ask them to promote it through their social channels.
- Ask your friends and family.
- Connect with your local community via fliers, messaging boards, etc.

## 3 MONTHS BEFORE THE EVENT

### 1. Create the agenda for your event.

Depending on the goals for your event, you may want to focus on only planting trees or you may want to include other activities like those from the Girl Scout Tree Promise patch or talks by guest speakers. Once you know what you want to do during your event, create an agenda with times to help determine your event flow.

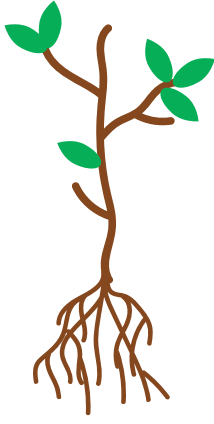
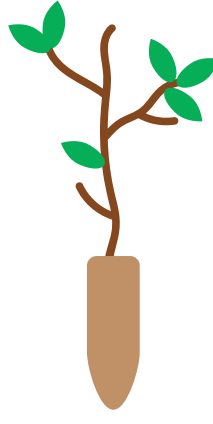


To get started, check out the **Sample Event Schedule** in the “Additional Resources” section of this guide. For activity ideas, see the **Girl Scout Tree Promise: Program Toolkit**.



## 2. Order trees and supplies.

Work with your tree-planting partner to order the trees and supplies for your event. If you need help finding a nursery, check out the [Trees Near You Directory](#) to find one in your state.

Here are some average sizes and costs of four types of trees for planting:

			
<p><b>Bare-root seedlings (\$0.50–\$3.00):</b> They're small and lightweight. A bare-root seedling can fit in an adult's hand and be easily planted by one person.</p>	<p><b>Containerized seedlings (\$1.00–\$5.00):</b> They're small and lightweight. A containerized seedling can fit in an adult's hand and be easily planted by one person.</p>	<p><b>Containerized trees (\$75–\$250+):</b> They're large and very heavy. A containerized tree can take three or more adults to move to the planting hole.</p>	<p><b>Balled and burlapped trees (\$75–\$250+):</b> They're large and very heavy. A balled or burlapped tree can take three or more adults to move to the planting hole.</p>

Apart from the trees, you'll need other supplies such as mulch, stakes, and ties. Review the **Sample Budget Worksheet** in the "Additional Resources" section of this guide for a full list of tools and planting supplies.

## 3. Invite media participation.

Depending on the size and scale of your event, you may want to seek out media to tell them about your event. Consider reaching out to local news outlets about the Girl Scout Tree Promise.

## 4. Plan social media promotion.

Use the social media toolkit to share information about the Girl Scout Tree Promise with your membership, partners, and your wider community.



## 2 MONTHS BEFORE THE EVENT

### Prepare the site.

As your event gets closer, make sure to prepare your site for the event by:

- Taking “before” photos
- Checking with local service providers about underground and overhead utilities
- Marking the location for each tree using flags
- Making sure the site is safe and accessible
- If necessary, clearing competing vegetation (e.g., weeds)
- Digging test holes to see how hard the ground is
- If necessary, digging the holes before the planting event. Some partners might be able to dig holes with a backhoe.
- Planning how you’ll get water to the newly planted trees
- Distributing mulch across the planting site so your girls and other participants can access it after planting

## DAY OF THE EVENT

### 1. Assemble equipment and supplies.

Develop a plan ahead of time to pick up or receive trees from the nursery. Think about how the girls and other participants will transport the trees and place them in their planting spots.

On planting day, create a sign-in sheet for girls and other participants. Make sure everything your attendees will need for the event is ready to go.

### 2. Instruct participants and demonstrate proper planting.

Once participants arrive, distribute the **Tree Planting** handout for them to share.

Then, give a planting demonstration covering the following:

- Handling trees carefully
- Planting properly
- Staking and wiring
- Watering
- Mulching

### 3. Take photos during the event.

Throughout the event, make sure to take photos! Of course you want to remember your attendees and the great fun they had, but also remember to take photos of the planted trees so you’ll be able to compare these to the “before” photos you took of your site and any “after” photos you take in the



future. Looking at the changes will help you to monitor your tree's progress. Use photo release forms if planning to use your photos for social or other promotion after the event.

## AFTER THE EVENT

### 1. Log your trees in the Girl Scout Tree Promise Tracker.

After your event, make sure to log the trees you planted in the [Girl Scout Tree Promise Tracker](#)!

After logging the trees, you'll be emailed a link to purchase the Girl Scout Tree Promise patch for girls and other participants. You can also purchase the patch from the [Girl Scout Shop](#).

### 2. Schedule routine maintenance and care.

After you plant trees, it's important that you schedule routine maintenance and care so they can thrive. To get started, check out the **Sample Maintenance and Care Schedule** in the "Program Toolkit Resources" section of the **Program Toolkit** and create your own maintenance schedule.

Then, log any maintenance visits on your schedule. During these visits, make sure to:

- Water deeply around trees once a week unless there has been sufficient rainfall
- Refresh mulch annually
- Remove ties and stakes after one to two years

If you won't be the one taking care of the tree, it shouldn't be planted until you have a commitment from an agency, organization, or individual to provide maintenance for at least the first three years.

Each time, take "after" photos. This will help you to evaluate the sustainability of the trees and the success of your planting event.

If someone else will be caring for the trees, we recommend having them sign a pledge similar to the pledge in the **Sample Maintenance and Care Schedule** found in the "Program Toolkit Resources" section of the **Program Toolkit**.

### 3. Celebrate girls and others who helped.

After the event, you can thank your girls and other volunteers who participated in the event by:

- Sending a handwritten thank-you note
- Presenting a plaque or certificate
- Hosting a potluck dinner or a more formal dinner
- Including the name of key girls or other volunteers in your newsletter or local media communications
- Engaging local officials or celebrities to congratulate your Girl Scouts on planting
- Sending a virtual thank-you card



#### 4. Share the story and impact of your event on social media.

Tell us and the world about your event! If you want to, share the story of your event and photos on social media, with the GSUSA Girl Scout Tree Promise team at [girlsexperience@girlscouts.org](mailto:girlsexperience@girlscouts.org) (with photo release forms!), or with your local Girl Scout council. Post your story, photos, impact, and a link for others to join the Girl Scout Tree Promise. Make sure to hashtag any social media posts with #gsoutdoors, your council's tags, or other tags of partners you're working with.

#### 5. Evaluate the event.

Once everything has been done, reflect on what went well and what didn't. What could be improved in the future? What will you do for the next event?

As you consider improvements to your process, make sure to check the survival and growth rates of your trees and whether maintenance is being/has been done.

### Additional Resources for Hosting Tree-Planting Events

To help with planning your tree-planting event, we've included the following resources in this guide:

- **Girl Scout Tree Promise: Sample Budget Worksheet for Events**
- **Girl Scout Tree Promise: Sample Event Schedule**

For more information on the Girl Scout Tree Promise and activity ideas, see the **Girl Scout Tree Promise: Program Toolkit**. In the "Resources" section of the Program Toolkit, you'll find activity materials like the **Tree Planting** handout, the **Power of One Tree** handout, and the **Make the Girl Scout Tree Promise** card that can be used at your event.

# Sample Budget Worksheet for Events

Tools				
Item	Quantity	Source	Cost Per	Total Cost
Shovels				
Picks				
Rakes				
Pocket knife				
Pliers				
Hoses or buckets				
Wire cutters				
Pruning shears				
Wheelbarrows				
...				
			Subtotal:	
Supplies				
Item	Quantity	Source	Cost Per	Total Cost
Marking flags				
Stakes				
Ties				
Mulch				
...				
			Subtotal:	
Publicity Items				
Item	Quantity	Source	Cost Per	Total Cost
Fliers				
Ads				
Signs				
Social media ads				
			Subtotal:	
Girl and Other Participant Care				
Item	Quantity	Source	Cost Per	Total Cost
Water				
Cups				
Name tags				
Refreshments				
Restrooms				
First-aid kit(s)				

...Continued

Sign-in sheets				
Tables				
Chairs				
Trash cans				
Trash bags				
Gloves				
...				
			Subtotal:	
<b>Trees</b>				
Species	Quantity	Source	Cost Per	Total Cost
...				
			Subtotal:	

### Sample Event Schedule

Date of Event:

Venue:

Start Time	Finish Time	Activity	Coordinator
		Set up	
		Deliver trees to site	
		Girls and other participants arrive	
		Sign in and collect photo release forms	
		Kick-off ceremony and planting demonstration	
		Participants receive assignments	
		Tree planting	
		Participants return tools	
		Closing activity and/or refreshments	
		Planting quality check and cleanup	

# Girl Scout Tree Program: Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

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## About the Girl Scout Tree Promise

- What is the Girl Scout Tree Promise?
- Who does the Girl Scout Tree Promise expect to reach?
- Who is Girl Scouts partnering with for the Girl Scout Tree Promise?
- How can I get involved?
- Do I have to be part of Girl Scouts to plant a tree?
- How do we track our trees?
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- How does the Girl Scout Tree Promise relate to other Girl Scout badges/ Journeys?

## About the Girl Scout Tree Promise Patch Program

- How do I get a tree patch?
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- How do I receive trees?
- Do I plant a full tree or a seedling?
- Can I plant a tree with someone?
- Can I plant a tree for someone?
- Can I plant more than one tree?
- How many trees do I have to plant?
- Is there a time frame for planting my tree?
- What do I do if I can't plant a tree in my area?
- Can I plant something other than a tree?
- Does it matter where I plant my tree? Can I plant it on a random street?
- How do I maintain/care for a tree?
- What do I do if my tree dies?

## General Questions

- What is climate change?
- How does planting trees help fight climate change/global warming?
- I don't think climate change is a huge issue. Should I still participate?

# About the Girl Scout Tree Promise

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## What is the Girl Scout Tree Promise?

Girl Scouts is joining forces with the [Elliott Wildlife Values Project](#), [American Forests](#), and [SciStarter](#) to launch a bold environmental and conservation initiative in April 2021. We're setting out to plant 5 million trees in five years and to protect and honor new and existing trees. Not only is this great for wildlife, it'll also provide climate change mitigation and benefit our communities.

Girl Scouts everywhere are being called to help by planting, protecting, and honoring trees in their backyards, camps, communities, and states—across the country and even across the world. From Daisy through Ambassador Girl Scouts to adult members and partners, every member and friend of the Movement is being asked to join. Five million trees is A LOT of trees, but TOGETHER we can do it!

## Who does the Girl Scout Tree Promise expect to reach?

The Girl Scout Tree Promise will reach Girl Scout councils, troops, families, and the communities where Girl Scouts is active. Girls can participate in the GSTP patch program.

## Who is Girl Scouts partnering with for the Girl Scout Tree Promise?

Girl Scouts is joining forces with the [Elliott Wildlife Values Project](#), [American Forests](#), and [SciStarter](#) to launch the Girl Scout Tree Promise.

American Forests is Girl Scouts' subject matter expert for the Girl Scout Tree Promise. American Forests has been working longer—since 1875—than any other national nonprofit conservation organization in the United States to protect and restore the country's forests. American Forests will provide Girl Scouts with guidance on what types of trees to plant, how to take care of them, where to plant them, and who to partner with for tree-planting events. For more information on American Forests, check out American Forests' [website](#).

SciStarter connects people from all walks of life to real science they can do. More than 1500 “citizen science” projects are registered on SciStarter where millions of people turn to find their next adventure including: tagging monarch butterflies to track their migratory paths; counting stars to measuring light pollution; collecting and analyzing microbes to see what lives on and around us; and even annotating real online videos of blood flowing through vessels to accelerate Alzheimer's research. SciStarter is the place to find, join, and track your contributions to science, connect with researchers, and even access the resources needed to participate. It's people-powered science! Visit <https://scistarter.org>

## How can I get involved?

- **Girl Scouts:** Girls can plant, protect, and honor trees! They can earn the Girl Scout Tree Promise patch and help Girl Scouts to plant 5 million trees in five years.
- **Girl Scout Volunteers:** Volunteers can support girls to plant trees, log data in the [Girl Scout Tree Promise Tracker](#), and earn the patch. They can facilitate activities for girls to earn the patch through troop meetings or events.



- **Parents, caregivers, and families of Girl Scouts:** Families can support girls to plant trees, log data in the [Girl Scout Tree Promise Tracker](#), and earn the patch. They may also be able to share any related resources or connections, such as those with a nursery, county conservation department, landscaping company, faith group, piece of property, and so on.
- **Partners and other community organizations:** Connect with your local Girl Scout council to join the Girl Scout Tree Promise. There are many different opportunities for businesses, organizations, and community partners to partner on events and activities. Partners may be able to provide meeting space, resources, and/or space to hold planting events. This engagement does not require special skills or knowledge, just a commitment to advance nature-based solutions and improve the local community.

### **Do I have to be part of Girl Scouts to plant a tree?**

No! Everyone is welcome to participate in the Girl Scout Tree Promise!

### **How do we track our trees?**

It's critical that every tree planted is captured on the [Girl Scout Tree Promise Tracker](#).

### **Do I have to pay for anything?**

How you or your troop, council, or community decides to arrange a tree-planting event will determine if there is a cost. Additionally, you can purchase the Girl Scout Tree Promise patch from the [Girl Scout Shop](#).

### **Does the Girl Scout Tree Promise comply with social distancing guidelines?**

Yes. The Girl Scout Tree Promise provides options for tree plantings that support social distancing guidelines. Please check with your council's guidelines to confirm your project is in compliance with your local requirements.

### **How does Girl Scout Tree Promise relate to other Girl Scout badges/Journeys?**

Girls can connect the GSTP to other badges, Journeys, and awards, enhancing their experience and continuing to learn about the importance of trees.

One easy way to connect the GSTP to other Girl Scout programs is with the Think Like a Citizen Scientist Journey, available for each level, Daisy through Ambassador. Girl Scout volunteers can find full meeting plans on the Volunteer Toolkit (VTK), and girls can download the Journey for free on the [Girl Scout Shop](#).

The GSTP also connects with other Girl Scout Journeys and badges that focus on STEM, the outdoors, and advocacy. For example:

- **Daisy:** Between Earth and Sky Journey, Daisy Outdoor Journey, Welcome to the Daisy Flower Garden Journey, Rosie Petal, Clover Petal, Eco Learner Badge
- **Brownie:** WOW! Wonders of Water Journey, Brownie Outdoor Journey, Eco Friend badge, Bugs badge, Outdoor Adventurer badge
- **Junior:** Junior Outdoor Journey, Eco Camper badge, Animal Habitats badge, Flowers badge, Gardener badge





- **Cadette:** Breathe Journey, Cadette Outdoor Journey, Eco Trekker badge, Trees badge
- **Senior:** Sow What? Journey, Senior Outdoor Journey, Eco Explorer badge
- **Ambassador:** Justice Journey, Ambassador Outdoor Journey, Your Voice, Your World Journey, Eco Advocate badge, Water badge

Girls may also find ways to connect other badges, Journeys, and experiences with the GSTP. For example, they may want to use troop proceeds from the Girl Scout Cookie Program to purchase tree-planting supplies or seedlings. When they earn their [Cookie Business badges](#), encourage them to think about how they will incorporate their Girl Scout Tree Promise goals into their cookie business plans.

If girls want to amplify what they've already done, they can do so through a Take Action or [highest awards](#) (Bronze, Silver, Gold) project. In each of these awards, girls have the chance to create a sustainable project that solves a problem and makes a difference in the world. After working on the GSTP, girls may want to create projects related to climate change, how trees can help lessen climate change, or how they make a sustainable difference for our planet.

Find out more about Girl Scout badges and Journeys with [Award & Badge Explorer](#).

## About the Girl Scout Tree Promise Patch Program

### How do I get a tree patch?

If you plant a tree and register your tree within the Girl Scout Tree Promise Tracker, you'll be emailed a special link to purchase your patch! You can also purchase the patch from the [Girl Scout Shop](#).

### Can I receive more than one patch?

Yes! You can purchase one or more patches through the [Girl Scout Shop](#).

### Is there more than one type of patch I can earn?

Girls can complete the Girl Scout Tree Promise patch as a stand-alone piece, or they may wish to connect it to other badges, Journeys, and awards. See the **Program Toolkit** for guidance on connecting the initiative with Girl Scout badges and Journeys. The toolkit also includes ways to amplify what girls do for the Girl Scout Tree Promise with Take Action and highest award projects, other awards, and travel opportunities.

### Can my friend who helped plant also receive a patch?

Yes, everyone who participates can purchase a patch. You can purchase one or more patches through the [Girl Scout Shop](#).

## About Tree Planting

### How do I receive trees?

There are a variety of ways to acquire trees for the Tree Promise. For example, you may want to reach out to experts at both local and state levels.



## Local resources to assist with tree planting:

- **Local tree planting organizations:** These organizations specialize in tree planting and should be your first stop for information about tree-planting events, resources, and technical assistance.
- **Local nurseries:** Nurseries raise and sell trees and other plants. They're excellent sources for advice on which trees to plant in your community, and they can grow and provide trees for your planting projects—especially useful if you're planning to plant in your own yard or other privately owned properties.
- **Local government:** Call your city council or mayor's office to find out more about tree planting.
- **Trees Near You Directory:** Use the directory on the GSTP website to connect with local tree-planting partners.

## State resources to assist with tree planting:

- **State Forester:** The State Forester is the head forestry official in your state. Every state has a network of foresters who help groups like yours when planting trees. Many state forestry agencies also run tree nurseries where you can buy tree seedlings for your events.
- **State Urban and Community Tree Coordinator:** State Urban and Community Tree Coordinators are like State Foresters—they're specialists who can provide support and expertise to help you plant and care for trees in your community.
- **Conservation Districts:** Conservation District employees are focused on local conservation issues and provide expertise on the stewardship and conservation of soil, water, forests, and wildlife. They can help connect you with resources in your local community.

For more information on planting trees, check out the **Program Toolkit**.

### Do I plant a full tree or a seedling?

It depends! Work with your planting partner or nursery to help you determine what age tree is appropriate for your environment and what is available to you. Just be sure to protect and honor your tree.

### Can I plant a tree with someone?

Yes! Family, friends, colleagues, community members. Everyone is welcome. From Girl Scout Daisies through Ambassadors to adult members and partners, every member and friend of the Movement is being asked to join together to support the Girl Scout Tree Promise.

### Can I plant a tree for someone?

Yes! Tree planting is a great way to recognize and honor Girl Scouts and other community members. To lift up their work, you can provide opportunities for tree planting at Girl Scout or community meetings, celebrations, and programs.



You may also want to consider establishing tree-planting sponsorships and/or memorial tree donations. Numerous organizations, including [American Forests](#), have options on their websites for people to sponsor a tree or plant a tree in memory of someone.

### **Can I plant more than one tree?**

Yes! There are no limits, so please plant as many trees as you are able.

### **How many trees do I have to plant?**

Our goal is for every member of the Movement to plant at least two trees, but the more you can plant, the better!

### **Is there a time frame for planting my trees?**

Every year GSUSA will measure the Movement's progress over the course of the past year. Our hope is that every year people will plant more trees and earn a new patch.

### **What do I do if I can't plant a tree in my area?**

You can participate in the Girl Scout Tree Promise by protecting and honoring existing trees in your community.

### **Can I plant something other than a tree?**

To participate in the Girl Scout Tree Promise and earn the national patch, you have to plant, protect, or honor a tree. We recognize the benefits of planting other types of perennial plants but want to focus on trees.

### **Does it matter where I plant my tree? Can I plant it on a random street?**

There are rules and regulations for planting on public and private property. Please gain permission from the property owner before planting the tree.

### **How do I maintain/care for a tree?**

Newly planted trees need to be cared for after they've been planted in order to ensure the trees thrive! After planting, trees and shrubs should be watered every 7–10 days, more often in the summer. Other tasks (such as delimiting, weeding, mulching, pruning, and fertilizing) should be performed once every two weeks from March to October and as needed the rest of the year, taking into consideration natural rainfall.

Check out the **Schedule for Tree Maintenance & Care** for a list of tasks and an easy template to track your own maintenance plan, found in the "Resources" section of the **Program Toolkit**.

### **What do I do if my tree dies?**

We do understand that your tree may complete its life cycle faster than you would hope. Please remember to take care of your tree, but if all else fails, we encourage you to replant and try again!



# General Questions

## What is climate change?

Global climate is the average climate over the entire planet. The earth's global climate is changing, and as earth's temperature warms up, the weather is becoming more extreme and unpredictable, causing big changes worldwide—polar ice caps melting, wildfires, hurricanes, droughts, polar vortexes, extreme heat and cold, and so on. Keeping us safe from even worse impacts of climate change will require, by 2030, a substantial reduction in carbon pollution and major efforts to pull carbon out of the atmosphere. In addition, one million plant and animal species are now facing extinction unless we take definitive action to defend our planet. For more information on climate change, check out [Climate Change: How Do We Know?](#) from NASA.

## How does planting trees help fight climate change/global warming?

Planting trees can make a big impact in fighting climate change. A large tree absorbs 40–50 pounds of carbon dioxide—a greenhouse gas that causes global warming—per year. Over the course of its life, a single tree can capture and store one ton of carbon dioxide.

In one year, an acre of forest can absorb up to twice the carbon dioxide produced by the average car's annual mileage. Trees properly placed around buildings can reduce air conditioning costs by 50%, helping to eliminate the global warming effect from the electricity that would have been generated for that air conditioning.

Fulfilling the Girl Scout Tree Promise of planting 5 million trees will capture and store over 2 million metric tons of carbon dioxide over the next 50 years. This is equivalent to taking 425,000 cars off the road for a year, eliminating the annual carbon emissions from 239,000 homes, or not charging 255 billion smartphones.

Learn more with the **Power of One Tree** handout.

## I don't think climate change is a huge issue. Should I still participate?

Yes! Girl Scouts have always had a meaningful relationship with nature and the environment. Since 1912, Girl Scouts have had a special place in their hearts for caring for the environment, beginning with our founder, Juliette Gordon Low. The Girl Scout Promise and Law encourage us to “use resources wisely” and “to make the world a better place.” Girl Scouts have been, and continue to be, active in addressing the most important challenges facing our communities by speaking out and taking action—in ways both big and small. Girl Scouts are stewards of the earth and leaders in the environmental movement. This means assuming a sense of ownership for the well-being of the earth and understanding that environmental stewardship is fundamentally a moral issue. Learn more about the many benefits of tree plantings for our communities with the **Power of One Tree** handout.

