

2019 Earth Day & Arbor Day School Outreach Program

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Synopsis

The future of our natural resources lies in the hands of our children. Therefore, the Little Blue Natural Resources District feels youth education is a top priority. Earth Day & Arbor Day offer an excellent time for Staff to visit elementary aged children and offer them a parting gifts - a free tree. The children can actively participate in conservation effort with their families by planting the trees and observing them grow. This year, we added a fun feature to keep them engaged past our short classroom time. Students were given a hashtag (#LBNRDFreeTree) that they could utilize to post their trees once they were planted and as they grow.

Participating Schools & Tree Orders

SCHOOL	TREE TYPE(S)	NUMBER OF TREES
Abraham Lincoln Elem. Hastings, Nebraska McKenzie Bertrand 3 rd Grade	Colorado Blue Spruce Lilac Bush Norway Spruce Ponderosa Pine	5 5 5 5
Thayer Central Elem. Hebron, Nebraska Kurk Wiedel K-6th Grade	Colorado Blue Spruce Lilac Bush Norway Spruce Ponderosa Pine	75 20 75 50
Jefferson Intermediate Fairbury, Nebraska Sarah Roesler 4th Grade	Colorado Blue Spruce Lilac Bush Norway Spruce Ponderosa Pine	- 52 - -
Central Elementary Fairbury, Nebraska Lisa Maschmann PreK-2 nd Grade	Colorado Blue Spruce Lilac Bush Norway Spruce Ponderosa Pine	- 300 - -
Fillmore Central Geneva, Nebraska Jenny Eichelberger 4th Grade	Colorado Blue Spruce Lilac Bush Norway Spruce Ponderosa Pine	40 - - -
Lawrence/Nelson Lawrence, Nebraska Roger Biltoft K-6 th Grade	Colorado Blue Spruce Lilac Bush Norway Spruce Ponderosa Pine	50 - 50 -
Six Schools 732 Trees Distributed \$841.80 (\$1.15 per tree)	Colorado Blue Spruce Lilac Bush Norway Spruce Ponderosa Pine	170 377 130 55

Distribution Materials

Each tree was specially prepared for each event in bundles according to the school's order. Each tree was wrapped in a plastic sandwich bag that contained wet woodchips to keep the roots wet and safe during transport. Consequently, this also kept the mess down for the staff of the schools. Each bag was secured by a zip-tie that indicated the species of the tree – blue for blue spruce, pink for lilac, orange for norway pine, and yellow for ponderosa pine. This enabled staff to ensure they distributed the correct handout materials provided by the Little Blue NRD. These materials included a copy of how to properly plant a bareroot tree (provided by the Arbor Day website) and a piece of literature about the specific tree (provided by the NRCS website). Copies of the “We All Need Trees” curriculum specific to the age group of the child were also distributed (provided by the NACD website).

- NACD – We All Need Trees
 - <https://www.nacdnet.org/general-resources/stewardship-and-education-materials/2016-need-trees/>
- Colorado Blue Spruce
 - https://plants.usda.gov/plantguide/pdf/pg_pipu.pdf
- Norway Spruce
 - http://hort.ufl.edu/database/documents/pdf/tree_fact_sheets/picabia.pdf
- Lilac Bush
 - https://plants.usda.gov/plantguide/pdf/pg_syvi3.pdf
- Ponderosa Pine
 - https://plants.usda.gov/plantguide/pdf/pg_pipo.pdf
- How to Plant A Bareroot Tree
 - <https://www.arborday.org/trees/planting/graphics/bare-root.pdf>

Outcome

Seven hundred and thirty-two total trees were distributed to six schools, with the lilac bush being the popular choice of the year. Elysabeth was able to spend approximately 11.5 hours of classroom time interacting the students ranging in ages from pre-kindergarten to sixth grade. NRCS staff members, Christine Zabokrtsky & Dave Bedlan taught with Elysabeth at Central Elementary in Fairbury.

Key Points Addressed:

- What the NRD is and what we do.
- Where the trees came from – (Halsey & Bessey) & why they grow trees in the sandhills.
- Different types of trees, parts of the tree, where to and where not to plant, how to take care of the trees.
- Explaining why naming your tree is important (makes the tree more personal so you take better care of it.)
- How trees help with our ecosystems and the overall health of the planet.
- Uses of trees (paper, wood, etc)

Each teacher was given a survey after Elysabeth presented to their students. Feedback was indicated all teachers would highly recommend this program to others and included remarks such as the one below:

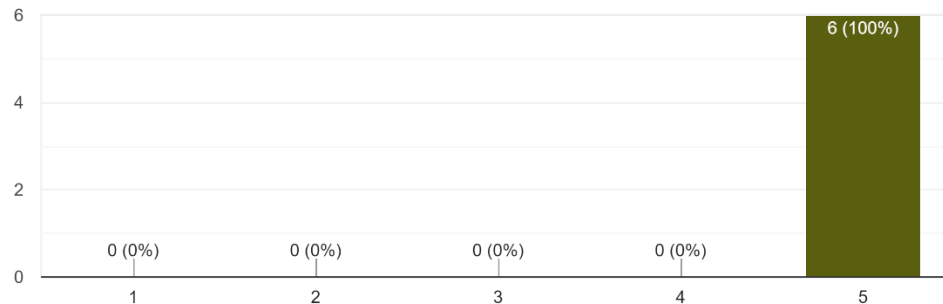
“The information presented fit very well with our social studies and science curriculum objectives. Several of the questions Elysabeth asked were a good review of concepts taught previously this year. New information was presented in an interesting way. Elysabeth held the students’ attention and was able to engage the group of 39. The students enjoyed their free tree. :)”

The complete survey results are attached to this report (pages 3 & 4).

Survey Results (taken from Google Forms)

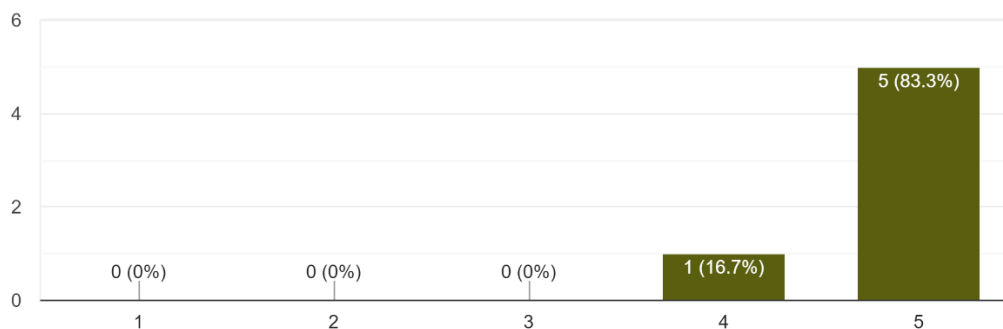
Do you believe the information provided by staff was factual and accurate?

6 responses



How satisfied were you with the event?

6 responses



What was your favorite take away? (6 responses)

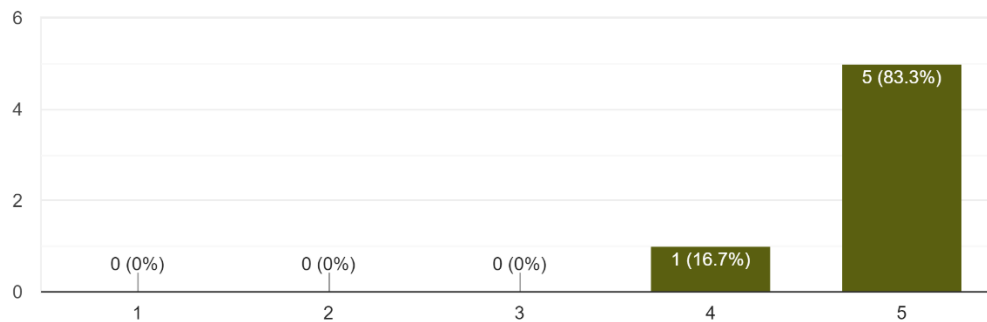
- Information about the importance of trees.
- I like that it was teaching information by asking questions and giving facts
- I liked that the students were able to answer the questions Liz had talked about, she had made the presentation very relatable and all students were able to learn something.
- kids were excited about planting trees
- The information presented fit very well with our social studies and science curriculum objectives. Several of the questions Elizabeth asked were a good review of concepts taught previously this year. New information was presented in a interesting way. Elizabeth held the students' attention and was able to engage the group of 39. The students enjoyed their free tree. :)
- You educated the students about natural resources and Halsey State Forest

What was your least favorite part of the program? (6 responses)

- Nothing!!
- I can't think of anything right now
- I don't really have one.
- it was all good
- None
- There was none

How likely will you be to recommend the program to other teachers and colleagues?

6 responses

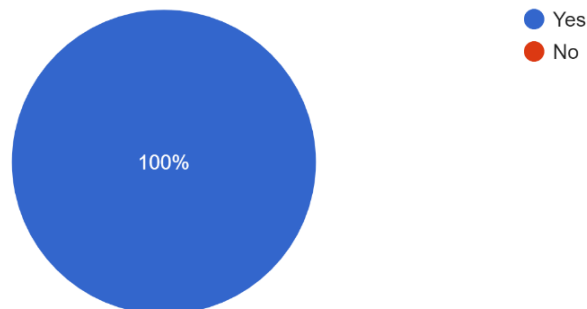


How can we make these presentations better? (6 responses)

- My staff loved it!! I wouldn't change a thing; however, if you return in the following year, you might want to mix up the content so the students do not get accustomed to it.
- No suggestions right now
- I think this was an excellent presentation. It was very organized and went off without a hitch. I can tell that there was a lot of forethought prior to the presentation.
- keep them short and to the point for younger kids
- I thought it was very well done. Thanks for your time and the trees. Please come back next year.
- They wanted more lilacs!

Did you find the handouts informational and age appropriate?

6 responses





Trees prepared beforehand for outreach program.



Christine Zaborkrtsky gets woodchips wet to place in the bags with the bareroot trees.



Special labels on bags ensure NRD recognition.



Dave Bedlan talks to a group of students about the importance of trees and shows them how to plant one properly.