

Celebrating trees and forests

Forests NSW Community Programs

Trees and forests are celebrated on a number of days throughout the year. Days to mark on your calendar include:

World Forestry Day	21 March
World Environment Day	5 June
Arbor Week	Last week of July
Arbor Day	Monday of Arbor Week
Wattle Day	1 September
National Landcare Week	First week of September
Biodiversity Month	Month of September
National Threatened Species Day	7 September

Arbor Day

Arbor Day is one day in the year that celebrates trees. The first Arbor Day celebration took place in Nebraska, USA in 1872, and was held to promote replanting following deforestation.

In time the idea spread throughout the world and this day is now celebrated in many countries. In some countries the whole week in which Arbor Day falls is celebrated. In Australia, Arbor Day was first celebrated on 16 July 1890. In NSW it is celebrated on the last Monday of July.

Arbor Day is the beginning of Arbor Week, and a large number of schools celebrate the week with a variety of activities. A popular activity is a tree planting ceremony, to promote the care and conservation of the environment through revegetation. This ceremony often involves the participation of school students, community members and sometimes officials from the local council or State Government.

World Forestry Day

World Forestry Day is celebrated around the world on 21 March, the day of the autumn equinox in the Southern Hemisphere. This day commemorates the contribution and value of forests and forestry to the community.

Wattle Day

Wattle Day is celebrated throughout NSW on the first day of September each year. It is one day of the year on which we focus on our native flora heritage and its uniqueness.

Wattle is the common name for Acacias. Acacias grow throughout the world, except in Europe and Antarctica. Of the 1000 or so known species, over 660 grow in Australia.

Wattles are one of the most spectacular of Australia's native flowering plants. The flowers and leaves of Acacias are very distinctive, as is the perfume of the flowers.

Wattle Day is traditionally celebrated by the handing out and wearing of sprigs of wattle and the planting of wattle trees.

World Environment Day

World Environment Day is celebrated throughout the world on 5 June to focus on the world's environment as a whole. The first World Environment Day was held in 1972, started by the United Nations Environment Program.

Our environment includes the air, water, and land that form the biosphere of planet Earth. The biosphere is the Earth's environment where all living things exist, from the smallest microorganism to the largest creature.

Biodiversity Month and National Threatened Species Day

A part of Biodiversity Month in September, National Threatened Species events are held each year on 7 September. National Threatened Species Day encourages the community to help conserve Australia's unique native plants and animals, and to raise awareness in extinction prevention and in restoring healthy numbers of endangered species and ecological communities in the wild. Contact your local government or environment/conservation group for more information on events in your area for Biodiversity Month and Threatened Species Day.

Things to do

You can celebrate trees and forests in a number of ways. Here are some exciting suggestions.

- Use forest management as the theme of a project or a case study of resource management
- Build a mini-greenhouse to grow and propagate native plants from seed
- Grow trees and shrubs from seed to plant in your yard, school area or a local community area
- Build bird-feeders and nesting boxes
- Try to make paper from tree materials, or even try your hand at recycling paper.
- Make a toy or musical instrument from tree products, like fallen and dried seed cases, branches, or limbs
- Write poems, songs, music, plays and stories about trees
- Make a wall chart, poster, display or mobile looking at trees, tree features such as leaves, flowers or seeds, different types of trees, or the life cycle of a tree
- Make leaf and bark rubbings, or splatter and impression prints using tree objects

Any of these activities can be part of your celebration of Arbor Day, Arbor Week, World Environment Day, World Forestry Day, Wattle Day, National Landcare Week or Biodiversity Month.

Growing your own native trees

It's very easy to grow your own trees. The following steps show you how to grow native plants.

1. Getting your seeds is easy – just collect some gumnuts or seed pods of local native trees and put them into a paper bag. Leave the bag in a warm, dry spot for a few weeks, until the nuts or

pods open and the seeds fall out. Place different seeds into separate labelled containers.

2. Sow your seeds by sprinkling them onto seed raising mix in a tray with drain holes. Put the tray in a warm, partly shaded spot and water it regularly. Don't let the soil become too dry or too wet.

Seed Raising Mix

- 4 parts coarse river sand
- 1 part peat moss

3. When your new seedlings have grown their second pair of leaves they are ready to plant into plots using potting mix.

Potting Mix

- 1 part good, rich soil
- 1 part sand
- 1 part leaf litter

4. Seedlings are best planted in the ground after the first rains of autumn, giving them a whole winter and spring to get established before the hot summer.
5. Plant your seedlings into the ground. Make a ditch around the stem for watering during summer. Give your seedlings plenty of water once a week and watch them grow.

What's in a name?

The names of trees are quite interesting, especially their botanical names. Each tree has a botanical name made up of two words. The first word of a tree's name is the genus name and the second word is its species name. The genus and species name of a tree identifies each tree like your surname and first name identifies you.

Sometimes plants are named after the person who discovered them or who first described them in detail, or after places, other important people or particular features, such as the way the tree or a part of the tree looks.

Here are some examples:

- *Acacia* – named from the Greek word *akakia*, meaning 'sharp and pointed' (referring to the spikes on some trees).
- *Angophora* – named from the Greek words *angos*, meaning 'a vessel' and *phora* meaning 'bearing' (referring to the cup-shaped fruits).
- *Banksia serrata* – named after Sir Joseph Banks, the first English botanist in New South Wales, and *serrata* describing its sawtooth-edged leaf.

- *Callistemon* – named from the Greek words *kallos*, meaning 'beauty' and *stemon* meaning 'stamen' (referring to the beautiful bottlebrush flowers).
- *Eucalyptus* – named from the Greek words *eu* meaning 'well' and *calyptos* meaning 'covered' (referring to the cap on the flower buds).
- *Ficus* – named from the Latin word *ficus* meaning 'fig-like fruits'.
- *Grevillea* – named after the early botanist Charles Greville.

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