

Application: 8148

Nature Playground Project

Please note certain sections of the application have been omitted to protect the anonymity of the applicant

Page: Greening Canada's School Grounds

Project Summary

Project Description

We are shifting our early childhood programming to nature-based play in the form of a nature playground. In spring of 2022 we will begin our nature playground project by landscaping our outdoor fenced play area with rocks, boulders, logs, and a hill, as well as adding trees and shrubs. Our children will use our proposed treed area to explore their senses, engage in nature, and manipulate natural elements. The trees will also provide shade and windbreak, which are problems we face with our current yard. This will increase usability and the amount of time the children are able to spend outside. Our outdoor classroom program will be able to educate our curious young students on concepts such as the seasonal changes that occur and what plants require to grow. They will be enthused to take part in planting and caring for our new trees and shrubs.

Canada Tree funds will be used on the following:

Trees and shrubs

Soil

Mulch (2.2 cubic yards)

Tree guards

Landscaping Contractor

Signage

Three Year Maintenance Fund

Our Goals:

1. Add greenery to each section of the yard, by June 30, 2022

- Design, price and budget the project. Establish timeline. (completed)

- Apply for funding, determine any necessary fundraising goals, select nursery(ies) to work with.

-Vice President will head this, working with the Fundraising Chair.

-Begin planting in May 2022, while completing the landscaping. Timing could slightly vary depending on weather and availability of trees.

- Members of the board, parent volunteers and contractor will participate in planting.
- Implement maintenance schedule using volunteer group to oversee and participate. Create group of volunteer parents in April 2022 before trees planted.

2. Incorporate greenery into programming

- Use twigs, leaves, and seeds from trees for crafts, scientific discovery, and sensory play.
- Integrate the maintenance of trees and shrubs as part of curriculum.

3. Include multisensory features to foster creative play

- Plant species with different textures and colours of bark, leaves and branches.
- Create sheltered “quiet” areas.
- Plant species with seeds, twigs, and leaves the children can manipulate.

Site Conditions (please select all that apply)

2 : Site is green but mostly grass and “wide open” or without windbreaks. There are few trees/shrubs are on the landscape, but they do not provide adequate cover from direct sun.

Number of Students

57

Approximately how many trees and shrubs will be planted as part of this project?

28

Select the anticipated planting season for your project

Spring (May 1st to June 30th)

Proposed planting date

6/4/2022

Community Engagement

Engagement (please select all that apply)

Community volunteers will participate in the design/implementation of the project, Students will participate in the design/implementation of the project, This project will fulfill an existing need in the community

Anything to add?

We are the only centre of its kind in our town of 5,000 and surrounding catchment area of 18,000. We play an important role in the community and would like to offer our young students enriching programming and the benefits of engaging in nature during their day. Providing this natural space for our

three- and four-year-old's today also gives them a connection to the environment that will hopefully continue. We are proud to enroll students of varying backgrounds, including many newcomers to Canada who are enrolled multiple days a week for the language benefits. This may be their and other students' primary play area.

The town does not have many public playgrounds, as two were recently demolished due to safety concerns. With Covid-19, school playgrounds have been restricted to only being available for attending students. This adds to the need for a quality outdoor area the children can enjoy while at nursery school. We are very passionate about providing this natural playground for our students and find that whenever we tackle a large project such as this, it brings all parents and community members together.

Future Engagement (please select all that apply)

Educational signage displayed on-site, Ongoing updates and photos shared on social or traditional media, Opportunities developed to use the project site (outdoor classroom, municipal programming, farmers markets, etc.) , Integration of planting site and benefits into school course curriculum

Anything to add?

Our project includes plans for one 16" x 24" sign to be mounted on fencepost with information that would interest and engage our students. We will name our contributors and include labelled pictures of the types of trees found in our yard, with their unique features such as identifying leaves and seeds. This way teachers can reference and discuss the species of trees, and can integrate it into play time, such as getting the students to collect one leaf of each tree listed.

It is very important to our school to add an outdoor classroom component, especially with the current emphasis on personal space and air circulation with Covid-19. Our proposed greenery addition will be extremely beneficial by adding shade, windbreak, materials, and natural science to explore. The process of planting and the ongoing maintenance will be so exciting for the students. It will be integrated into their outside time and they will learn valuable skills.

We also have a social media presence where we post pictures and thank our project contributors.

Sponsors Involvement

More than 20 volunteers can help with the planting

Anything to add?

We welcome any volunteers willing to participate in planting.

Technical Expertise and Maintenance Plan

Technical Expertise

We have two teachers on staff that can incorporate some maintenance in their day such as watering and monitoring plant health. This can be done while the teacher goes outside with the students, which is in each morning and afternoon session. There is also a cleaner that comes after each session, who could take on the duties if need be. We are confident we will be able to recruit the parent volunteers needed to plant and maintain the trees over the summer. This includes parents who have experience and post-secondary education in agriculture, as we are a farming community. We also have a six member board that can fill in any gaps.

During planting we plan to use both volunteers and a local landscaping contractor with a lot of experience. This contractor will already be on site landscaping other elements of the nature playground.

So far, we have received a lot of support from local greenhouses with this application. We have worked together before with fundraisers and will use these connections to ensure we have the information and resources we need to get our greenery planted successfully.

Monitoring and Maintenance

Weekly:

To be done by staff during the school year, while outside in the play yard. In the summer, done by parent volunteers.

Watering

- 2 x a week, more if hot and dry spell

Weeding

- weekly, as needed

General health check

- Broken branches

- Leaf health

- Mulch

Each Season Checklist:

To be done quarterly by the Vice President of the board as part of building maintenance. (this will be in a checklist chart to check off and provide more info as needed.)

Date: _____

Quarterly Check list:

Checked Action Required Date

In Depth Health Check:

Branches are healthy, no dead or broken

Bark is healthy with no fungus or missing areas

Leaves are appropriate size and colour, no fungus visible

Trunk flare is visible

Surface roots radiate and do not wrap around themselves or tree

Mulch:

Adequate amount (2-3"), not too thick

Kept away from the trunk and not touching

Pruning:

No basal suckers

No Broken branches

No rubbing or crossed branches

No branches that obscure views or exits

Promotion and Recognition

Promotion Description (please select all that apply)

Signage displayed at planting site, Social Media (Facebook, community website, online bulletin), Traditional Media (newspaper, politician communiques)

Anything to add?

Recognition Description (please select all that apply)

Sponsor and Tree Canada named in promotion of project (see above) , Sponsor and Tree Canada logos printed on signage displayed at planting site, Social media post with sponsor and Tree Canada tagged, Advertisement in local digital or print media

Anything to add?

Event Description (please select all that apply)

No intention for a public event

If applicable, describe your proposed event