



Girl Scouts Branch Out

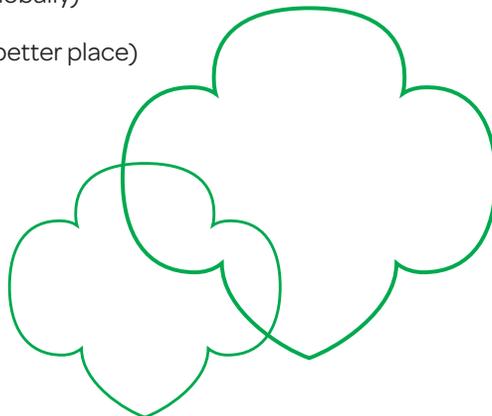
Girl Scouts Branch Out is a council-wide service project that Girl Scouts of all ages can participate in. The timeline of our program will coincide with Arbor Day. The goal of Girl Scouts Branch Out is to increase the number of trees planted throughout our council's jurisdiction, improve air quality at outdoor common spaces and increase knowledge about the benefits of trees.

Girl Scout History - The environment and the need to care for it has been at the core of Girl Scouting since its founding in 1912. Juliette Gordon Low said, "For in this United States of ours, we have cut down too many trees and our forests are fast following the buffalo." This project will help girls reflect on the choices they are making in their own life and empower girls to make a difference by working in a team and understanding the impact a project can make when the entire Girl Scout community works together.

Girl Scouts Branch Out gives girls the opportunity to develop **leadership skills** they can use now and throughout their lives. This community action project is also well aligned with the *It's Your Planet—Love It!* and *It's Your World, Change It!* Journey series, so girls are also climbing the Girl Scout Leadership Experience ladder and working their way toward earning prestigious Journey leadership awards. Through participation in Girl Scouts Branch Out, girls will:

- » **Discover** (themselves and their values)
- » **Connect** (with others locally and globally)
- » **Take Action** (to make the world a better place)

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Why Are We Planting Trees?

Below are some of the benefits of planting trees in your local community and why they are key components of global ecosystems:

- Carbon sequestration. Trees act as natural filters of our air.
- Trees produce oxygen. One mature tree produces enough oxygen for ten people to inhale in a year.
- Trees improve biodiversity and provide habitat for wildlife. Up to 90% of all terrestrial animals live in association with forest habitats. In simple terms, the less trees the less viable habitat for many species.
- Soil erosion. The roots of trees bind the soil and prevent erosion.
- Water conservation. Trees slow water runoff after periods of heavy rainfall.
- Temperature control. Shade from trees reduces the need for air conditioning in hot locations.
- Trees clean the soil. Trees sometimes store harmful pollutants or can actually, in some cases, change the pollutant into less harmful forms.
- Social and communal benefits. An environment replete with trees and vegetation can lead to a more serene, peaceful and restful frame of mind.

Participation is EASY, just follow the steps listed!

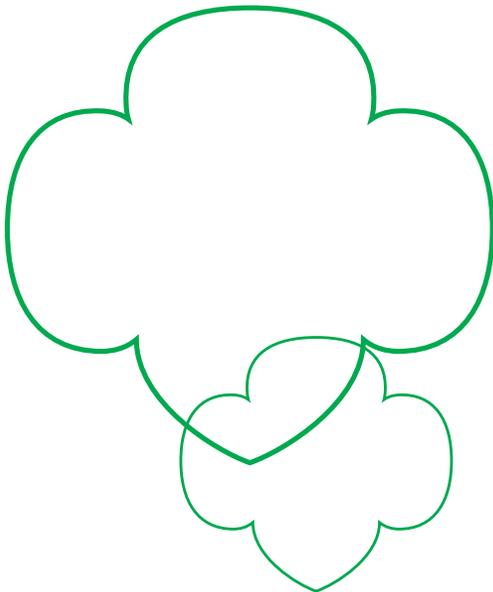
Step 1 - Take a vote

Discuss the project and what is involved and have girls vote on whether they would like to participate.

Do you want to plant a tree but have a conflict with this? Contact Mike Hoffer Stewardship Director for the Ozaukee Washington Land Trust to plant a tree at one of their sites, mhoffer@owlt.org or (910) 612-1909. Check our website for more information about our May 3, 2014 tree planting option in Washington County.

Step 2 - Investigate and decide where to plant the tree

- Have girls investigate and identify a community gathering space that would benefit from the planting of one tree. Some places you might want to consider:
 - > Local government building (city hall, court house, etc)
 - > School
 - > Church
 - > Hospital
 - > Retirement home
 - > Neighborhood
 - > Park
- Decide which spaces the girls like best by taking a vote and then ask the proprietors for permission to plant a tree on their property.



Step 3 - Register to pick up a tree at gswise.org.

Stein Gardens & Gifts has donated 100 one-gallon Colorado Blue Spruce trees for Girl Scouts Branch Out. Troops may register to pick up a tree on **Saturday, April 26 from 9:00 a.m.-noon** from any of the Stein Gardens & Gifts locations listed below. **Only one volunteer per troop needs to register.** Please note: Weather in Milwaukee and states where the inventory originates may impact delivery time. Growers and Stein Gardens & Gifts may need to delay delivery in case of cold weather, snow or ice. If any changes occur, you will be notified with a new pick-up time.

Stein Gardens & Gifts Pick up Locations:

Kenosha - 6300 Green Bay Road, Kenosha

Mequon - N10850 W13 Port Washington Road, Mequon

Milwaukee - 5400 South 27th Street, Milwaukee

Racine - 6626 Washington Avenue, Racine

Waukesha - 2220 East Moreland Boulevard, Waukesha

West Bend - 601 Wildwood Road, West Bend



Step 4 - Learn How to Plant and Care for a Colorado Blue Spruce

Here are some great tips from Cassidy Emmerson.

Brief History of the Colorado Blue Spruce

According to arborday.org, this coniferous tree wasn't discovered until 1862. It was first spotted growing in the elevated Rocky Mountains. Since then, the popularity of the Colorado Blue Spruce has grown tremendously. It's even the state tree for Colorado and Utah as well. It is sometimes used as a holiday tree.

How to Plant a Colorado Blue Spruce

1. Find the Right Location

When you search for the perfect spot in your yard to plant your tree, keep these facts in mind: on the average, a Colorado Blue Spruce grows to be 35 feet high and 15 feet across. It grows best in moist, nutrient-rich but well-drained soil. This type of evergreen prefers full or partial sun. It doesn't grow well in shade.

2. Dig the Hole

To plant your Colorado Blue Spruce, you'll need to dig a hole that's three times the width of its rootball. The hole will need to be deep enough so when you plant the tree, the top of the rootball will be level with the surrounding ground.

3. Plant Your Tree

When you plant your Colorado Blue Spruce, center it in the hole. Fill the hole back up with the soil you dug out and level the top out. Then, water the tree lightly and place a couple inches of mulch around its base. The mulch will help keep the soil moist while the Blue Spruce is getting established in its new location.

To ensure sustainability, you might need to identify someone to care for your tree.

How to Care for a Colorado Blue Spruce

1. Water Your Young Tree Once a Week in Dry Weather

Mature Colorado Blue Spruces are pretty resistant to drought. However, in dry weather, you'll need to water your young tree once a week to keep the soil moist until it's established.

2. Prune Your Tree in the Early Spring

One fine characteristic of the Colorado Blue Spruce is that it doesn't normally require pruning (cutting off live branches and foliage). The only pruning you'll need to do on this slow grower is remove any dead branches in the spring.

3. Fertilize in the Spring and in the Fall in Its Third Year

According to the New Mexico State University Yard and Garden Extension, Colorado Blue Spruces shouldn't be fertilized for the first two years after you plant them. For the first two years, these trees need to grow their root systems. Fertilizing them stimulates top growth which they don't need yet. Established Colorado Blue Spruces should be fertilized in the spring after it has started growing again. And, again in the fall after the tree has stopped growing.

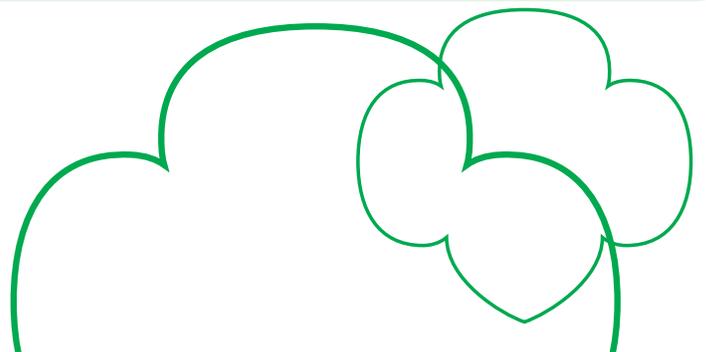
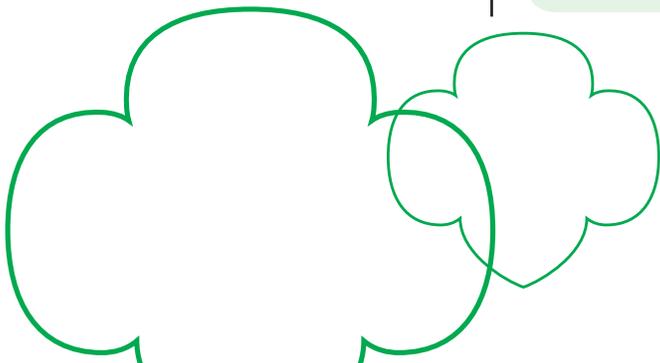
4. Watch for Destructive Diseases and Insects

Colorado Blue Spruces can live to be 200 hundred years old, and older. However, this fir has its enemies, which can shorten its life expectancy. The most common enemy of the Colorado Blue Spruce is a fungus called Rhizosphaera needle cast. This disease affects the needles starting at the bottom of the tree, making them turn brown. The needles then fall off. After awhile, as the disease works its way up, the Colorado Blue Spruce will be thin and not filled out. If you notice these symptoms on your Colorado Blue Spruce, consult a nursery or a tree doctor for advice on treatment.

As for damaging insects that can ruin your tree, the white pine weevil is an enemy in the eastern part of the country. Western and eastern budworms are two more destructive insects to watch out for on your Colorado Blue Spruce.

For More Resources:

- Fun Facts about Trees: <http://www.treesaregood.org/funfacts/FunFacts.aspx>
- Girl Scouts Forever Green: <http://www.girlscouts.org/gforevergreen>
- Kids Face: <http://www.kidsface.org/pages/plant.html>
- Tree Planting for Kids: http://www.ehow.com/how_6757989_plant-tree-kids.html



Step 5 - Plan Girl leadership activities to tie into Girl Scouts Branch Out

Take an Outdoor Walk

Take a walk in nature. While out, have girls each collect one natural item. The only catch is they must all collect the same type of item, such as a fallen leaf or acorn. So first, the girls must make a group decision about what they will collect.

States of Water Stations

Trees are living things and need water to survive. To learn about state of water, try this fun activity.

- **Step 1** – To show water turning from liquid to vapor, heat water in an electric tea kettle or on a hot plate until steam is visible.
- **Step 2** – Using a pot holder, move an object cooler than the heated water – such as a glass, a mirror or a plate – close to the stream of vapor. As the vapor hits the cooler object, it will form back into water droplets, just as water vapor in clouds becomes liquid again as rain. This is condensation.
- **Step 3** – Fill ice cube trays or several small containers with water. Place the trays or containers in a freezer or cooler lined with ice or freezer bricks. Ask the girls to guess how long it will take for water to transform into its third possible state – a solid, ice.

Design a Tree House

Have girls check out the basics of architectural drawing and draft the plans for their dream tree house. Have them present their plans to friends to see if they'd like to live there – or show an architect the designs to see if they would work. For more FUN: Have a contest for the most original tree house design.

Read the Giving Tree by Shel Silverstein

After reading the story, have girls think about “people who are giving to me” and then “how I can be more giving.” Have the girls write a thank you letter to someone who is very giving to them.

Tree Bark Rubbings

Supplies: Crayons, construction paper, tape and a tree

Find a tree with rough bark. Gently tape a piece of paper to the bark. Remove the Crayon's outer paper. Begin rubbing across the paper. See the pattern revealed. Gently remove tape and paper from the tree. To make a book cover, place the book on the center of the paper. Fold in top and bottom edges. Place book in the center. Fold ends in on back and front covers. Insert book ends into the flaps. Enjoy reading your book.

Come up with your own tree-related project!



Step 6 - Let us know how your project went!

Visit gswise.org/GirlScoutsBranchOut and take a minute to fill out our survey.

