

GET YOUR HANDS DIRTY FOR NATIONAL TREE DAY THIS SUNDAY

EARTH FIRST ARTICLE

By Peter West

History of the event

This year is the 14th year of National Tree Day and more than 2 million volunteers have planted over 13 million native trees and shrubs throughout the country.

Coordinated by Planet Ark and sponsored by Toyota, National Tree Day is Australia's biggest community tree-planting event and a day for all Australians to help out by planting native trees and shrubs at a registered Tree Day site in their local area.

National Tree Day will be held on Sunday 2nd August, with Schools Tree Day taking place on the Friday 31st July.

In 2008, over 312 000 people, including 229,000 school children planted trees to improve their natural surroundings. National Tree Day shows everyone how easy and enjoyable it is to help the environment.

National Tree Day aims to inspire, educate and involve Australians in actively caring for our unique land and create future generations of committed environmental custodians.

The event is all about planting native species that are local to your area. Locally occurring native plants (or endemic plants) have a better chance of survival, particularly in drought conditions, since they have evolved to suit the conditions in your area.

Growing local native trees, shrubs and ground covers helps to provide food and shelter for local wildlife, increase native biodiversity and combat the habitat loss that threatens many of our native animal species.

It is a 'tree-mendous' opportunity to make a positive contribution in our community, with benefits to the environment and your neighbourhood.

Volunteers needed in Orange

Orange City Council is again hosting the event in Orange.

Location: Sir Jack Brabham Park (corner of Forest Road and Huntley Road)

Date and time: Sunday, 2 August 2009 from 10:00am to 3:00pm.

BBQ included

The aim is for planting to enhance the biodiversity and appearance of the recently constructed storm water harvesting dam with the planting of native trees and shrubs.

It will also improve water quality, combat erosion, reduce salinity and provide a corridor between remnant bushland and other re-vegetated areas.

Participants are asked to wear appropriate outdoor clothing (including hat, covered shoes, long sleeved shirt and long pants). All tools and equipment will be supplied, and a BBQ will be provided for volunteers. The site is suitable for children, and accessible for disabled.

To volunteer, simply turn up on the day and look out for the National Tree Day sign.

For further information, please contact the **National Tree Day hotline** on **1300 88 5000** or the website (<http://treeday.planetark.org>). Information used in this article was obtained from Planet Ark.

Green dates for the calendar

Keep Australia Beautiful Week, August 24-30 (see www.kab.org.au).