

Wild Plants: Earth Day Trees & Trash

Benzie Central High School & Academy After School

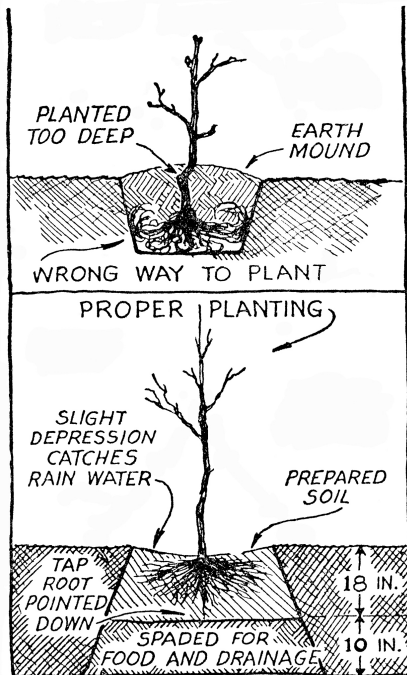


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Ecology & Education Centers

Today marks the 50th Anniversary of **Earth Day** which was first observed on April 21, 1970. The U.S. President that year, Richard Nixon, celebrated the first **Earth Day** in by planting a tree on the White House Lawn. An estimated twenty million people attended the first **Earth Day's** activities all across the country. That same year, President Nixon created the Environmental Protection Agency, and signed the Clean Water Act and Clean Air Act into law with broad bipartisan support.

Students from Benzie Central High School have observed **Earth Day** for many years by removing trash and planting trees with their teachers and classmates. Some years the weather wasn't cooperative to do these environmental acts of kindness on the actual **Earth Day** itself. I remember one year having to postpone our **Earth Day** activities until early May because there was still a lot of snow on the ground in late April!



You can celebrate **Earth Day** this year by **planting a tree or shrub** with your family. You might be wondering like I did, where will you get some seedlings to plant this year due to the current virus crisis? Well, I recently noticed some evergreen seedlings growing in the woods by my house that are not in ideal locations. Either they're growing too close to another tree, a power line, or the road, and will eventually die or have to be cut down. I'm planning on digging up those seedlings and moving them to better locations where they can grow into big, healthy trees.

Be sure to plant your tree(s) properly. Take some care to dig a large enough hole for the root system to spread out within. There's an old saying, "dig a fifty-dollar hole for a five-dollar tree." Study the diagram to the left to get an idea how to properly plant a tree. Be sure to water your newly planted tree on a regular basis until it gets established!

You can also celebrate **Earth Day** by **removing trash**. There's always litter and discarded trash lying around that could be removed to make your part of the world a nicer place. Sometimes trash prevents wild plants and animals from thriving as they should and it makes our environment less pleasing to live in. Most of the items I find where I live has been moved by the wind, or thrown out of a passing vehicle by a careless human. Be sure to recycle any items you find that are recyclable: papers, plastics, metals, etc.

Trees & Trash Challenge: Sometime soon try finding a tree seedling in an poor growing situation and transplant it to a better site. Take time to water and observe your adopted tree(s). Pick up trash that you find in the area and remove it from the natural environment to benefit the plants, animals, and humans that live nearby. Be sure to take photos of your **Earth Day** endeavors to share with your friends and family. Your kind actions for the Earth can inspire others too!

