

16. ARBOR DAY FUNDING

Officer responsible Parks & Waterways Manager	Author Ann Liggett, DDI 337-4513 Alison Taylor-Hayhurst, DDI 371-1633
Corporate Plan Output: Community Partnerships 9.4.1	

The purpose of this report is for the Board to decide on how it would like to spend funding allocated for Arbor Day.

BACKGROUND

During 1998/99 a review of the Arbor Day activities within the various Community Board areas was undertaken in an effort to introduce a consistent programme across the city which would involve school pupils or incorporate the planting programme into classroom learning activities. As a result Riccarton/Wigram, Shirley/Papanui and Burwood/Pegasus Community Boards each set aside \$2,000 for the introduction of an Arbor Day Schools Programme within each Board's area of responsibility.

Fendalton/Waimairi Community Board provided funds for exotic trees for schools grounds within its area. For the past two years both the Fendalton/Waimairi and Hagley/Ferrymead Boards have participated in the programme.

Spreydon/Heathcote Community Board continued to operate its own Arbor Day programme, co-ordinated by the then Area Parks Officer, offering shade trees to schools, until last year when it also joined the city-wide programme.

CURRENT PROGRAMME DETAILS

The programme provides primary and intermediate schools with the opportunity to apply for trees and plants for grounds enhancement, shelter and shade. Planting is carried out from the time leading up to Arbor Day (5 June) until Conservation Week (6-12 August).

The objectives of the programme are to:

- Develop an awareness and appreciation of trees in the local environment
- Provide an educational asset within the school grounds
- Create an environmental awareness project in which schools can participate in the development
- Provide resources for the enhancement of natural areas in school grounds within each Community Board area
- Restore some of Christchurch's original plantings
- Provide a legacy in our schools and reserves for the benefit of future generations

The on-going offer ensures that schools have an opportunity to build onto the site which can be used as a learning resource, as well as enabling the school to undertake an incremental development of a long term plan as funding allows.

Schools that respond are given vouchers and asked to select and pick up their plants from Trees for Canterbury. In return they are asked to:

- Provide a planting plan - anything from a rough sketch identifying plant numbers and where plants are to be located within the school grounds, to a detailed professional plan for the overall school grounds highlighting the site targeted. By requesting a planting plan we hope to encourage schools to give careful consideration to what they plant and where.
- Place mulch over the planted area.
- Involve children in the planting and maintenance of the plants provided on an ongoing basis - details on how this is to be achieved as well as the number of pupils involved are requested on the registration of interest form.
- Ensure messages learned during the planting are followed up and reinforced within the classroom.

Preparation of the planting site, mulching, after care and maintenance remains the responsibility of the school.

They can also request an education pack, landscape advice and a classroom visit covering the importance of caring for our natural environment. The education pack contains information on Arbor Day, a series of activities for levels one to four, a care guide for looking after trees, a description of six native trees and a list of resource books available from the public libraries.

A Parks and Waterways Area Advocate or Park Ranger is assigned to each school and it is their responsibility to provide on-site assistance, ensuring the correct ground preparation is carried out and plants are appropriately planted. Community Board members are advised by the Parks and Waterways Area Advocate of the schools planting programmes within their ward areas so that if they wish they can be involved in the plantings.

The participating partners in the programme are:

- Community Boards who provide the core funding.
- The Parks and Waterways Unit who co-ordinate the programme and provide assistance to schools.
- Trees for Canterbury who provide a 50/50 special – they double the number of plants ordered free of charge eg: buy one and get one in a milk carton free.
- A1 Contractors who offer discounted mulch and other Living Earth products to schools.

The funding available to schools is dependent on how many in each Board area participate but is usually in the range of \$100-\$150. Last year eight schools in the Spreydon/Heathcote area participated in the programme and were each given a voucher for \$150.00.

PROMOTION OF FRUITING TREES FOR ARBOR DAY

A suggestion has been put forward to promote the planting of edible fruiting trees in schools as a contribution to Arbor Day. This suggestion has several positive benefits:

- The planting of edible fruiting trees ties in with the concept of “Kids’ Edible Gardens”.
- Apples and pears are available as double or triple worked trees i.e. two or three varieties grafted onto the same tree.
- Children will have the opportunity to learn about the stages of fruit development from pollination by bees through to ripening.
- Children will have the opportunity to learn more about the changing seasons by following the changes in the trees.
- Fruit will be available to the children to eat.

POTENTIAL ISSUES

- Although some varieties are advertised as being pest resistant all apple and pear trees are susceptible to black spot and codling moth to varying degrees. Further research would be desirable on those most resistant species and their availability.
- If schools want to ensure a crop from cherry trees they would have to look at methods of lessening the impact of birds who will eat the fruit before it is palatable to humans.
- There would be less participation by children in the planting process due to a smaller number of trees being planted. Schools would not have the advantage of the Trees for Canterbury subsidy.
- Stock is being ordered now for delivery June – August. One wholesaler contacted has already has all his stock of stone fruit pre-ordered.
- Wholesalers start lifting and bagging their trees in the first full week of June, which may mean supplies of trees may not be available by Arbor Day (5 June). If trees are ordered through Linwood Nursery and it is a reasonable order, they may be lifted a week earlier. Linwood Nursery can buy the trees from a wholesaler at good rates e.g. for apples - \$10-11 each, double worked tree \$17.00, triple worked tree - \$24 – plus freight cost.
- If Linwood Nursery were to order the trees to take advantage of wholesale rates the order would need to be submitted within the next fortnight but with no guarantee we would get stock. We would have to know how many and of what varieties were required. There would be pressure to get information from schools within this timeframe.
- The trees could be provided by a garden centre but at a higher individual cost (\$40-\$50 per tree). They may also already have existing stock. Despite the additional cost of trees by ordering this way, it has the advantage that Linwood Nursery would not be left holding any stock that they could not sell on as they normally have no demand for fruit trees. It would also solve the problem of not knowing at this stage how many trees to order.

A Garden Centre in the Spreydon/Heathcote area could be contacted to ascertain:

- Their willingness to participate in the fruiting trees programme and redeem vouchers from schools.
- Their willingness to offer some form of sponsorship towards the fruiting trees programme.
- What species of fruiting trees do they stock and would they have numbers available if they were not pre-ordered.
- Do they have existing stocks of trees and if not, when does their new stock begin to arrive and when would schools be able to start redeeming their vouchers.

Should the Spreydon/Heathcote Board wish to proceed with the planting of fruiting trees, responsibility for co-ordination of the process will need to be ascertained.

CONCLUSION

Both programmes have their merits, however as there is higher maintenance on fruit trees than on native planting, the school participating may not have the resources available to undertake this. The co-ordination of the fruiting trees programme would need to be investigated.

Recommendation: That the Board's allocation of \$1,500.00 towards the Arbor Day programme be spent on either:

- (a) Current Arbor Day Schools Programme; or
- (b) Edible Fruiting Trees in Schools; or
- (c) A combination of the two

Chairman's

Recommendation: That the Board support the planting of edible fruiting trees in schools.