

BOXERWOOD *Newsleaf*

May/June 2018

Planting Forests for the Future



Plant it . . . and it will grow! This is Boxerwood’s approach for its garden and education programs as well as the concept behind a new student-action project featuring trees!

Each year we “plant seeds” of the wonder and knowledge of nature in 2,500 children who participate in our education programs. We tend to those Boxerwood children and their learning year after year. We imagine our Boxerwood “seedlings” taking root, flourishing, and making the world a better place. One aspect of our work at Boxerwood is to grow earth stewards, and why not advance that work by having our young friends grow trees?

This spring, about 400 students from seven schools will plant 350+ native trees for our Rockbridge watershed. With help from the Virginia Dept. of Forestry, Rockbridge 4-H, and our funder, the Cacapon (WV) institute, Boxerwood will provide, at no cost to schools, an annual program called Growing Native.

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At Boxerwood, students will learn how native trees protect streams, reduce soil erosion, provide wildlife habitat, and more. Back at school, they will receive tree seedlings (called “whips”) to plant in pots for a year. After a year, the students decide as a class what to do with their trees: sell, plant, and/or donate.

This year, five schools will plant 270 trees for the program. The trees are housed and watered for the summer at our official tree nursery at Fairfield Elementary School, and at two school garden sites at Waddell and Natural Bridge Elementaries (thank you, Master Gardeners and Roots and Shoots!). Next year, those pin oaks, bald cypresses, and river birches will be ready to join the watershed.

Our one-year-old trees are ready for planting. With the help of the city of Lexington, the entire 6th grade will plant 30 of their natives in Woods Creek Park. The silky dogwoods and beeches will strengthen the riparian buffer along the creek. The 5th grade at Fairfield will plant white pines and a couple of native apple trees in the Fairfield forest to increase wildlife habitat and protect soil. Even students in an afterschool program at Maury River Middle School have added a dogwood to their school campus.

The Growing Native Program continues to grow. Soon, every year Boxerwood students will plant the equivalent of a small forest for Rockbridge. Those trees will keep on giving their whole unfurling lives. And that’s our hope for our Boxerwood earth citizens, too.

Thank you, Boxerwood friends, for helping us grow mighty future forests year after year.

by Elise Sheffield, Education Director

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