



Young Tree Champions Project Application Guidance

Thank you for registering with the Young Tree Champions programme, in partnership with M&G.

This document provides step-by-step guidance to help you apply for a Young Tree Champions (YTC) project in your school, which will make you eligible for an exciting package of training and resources, including trees to plant with your pupils.

All schools that successfully demonstrate being a Force for Nature and deliver their project have the potential to achieve '[Beacon School' status](#) - an exemplar school at a national level.

This guidance will help you plan your project in detail and develop a project action plan with your Young Tree Champions - a template can be found [here](#). The current deadline for applications is 5 March 2021. All schools will hear whether they have been selected for a tree pack or tech kit or public speaking workshop by the 10 March.

COVID-19: We are mindful of the pressures teachers and children are under, so we will work to support you as much as possible in completing your YTC project planning and application form. Please get in touch at schools@treecouncil.org.uk if you have any questions or concerns.

About the application form

This guide takes you through the 7 sections of the application form:

1. [Getting started](#)
2. [Essential organisation details](#)
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1. Getting started

A summary of what you need to know before you get started

You are applying to deliver a Young Tree Champions project. Successful schools have the opportunity to receive (subject to selection):

- A tree pack of five native trees, available in small, medium, large and extra-large sized trees depending upon the space you have available
- A tech kit, filled with tech resources to help your students explore trees
- A full-day public speaking workshop for your children with our partners at Speakers Trust
- A suite of teacher training opportunities delivered by The Tree Council, Learning Through Landscapes, Speakers Trust and The University of Derby, in addition to accompanying learning resources

The goal of Young Tree Champions is to be a #ForceForNature by connecting, learning and sharing the power of trees, to help tackle the climate and ecological crisis and create a healthier future for all. In your application, you'll need to show how you plan to achieve this with your project.

Before you start this application, you should:

- Have a clear plan for your project which identifies what matters most to your Young Tree Champions and school community
- Know where you would plant your trees
- Know how you will get the whole school engaged in the project

When you are ready to apply

- Go to www.youngtreechampions.org
- Have all the details and information about your YTC project to hand to complete the application process
- The actual application form should take under an hour to complete
- Make sure you save your application as you go - you can return to it at any time
- Please provide as much information as you can, filling in every 'required' field. This will help us assess your application

We know COVID-19 continues to have a big impact on schools and may limit the activities you can plan for your Young Tree Champions this year. Keep it simple and if you have any questions or concerns, please get in touch at schools@treecouncil.org.uk



2. Essential organisation details

Here you will be asked to enter your details, such as the name of the YTC project, your school address and your contact details. These details will also be used to set you up with a Young Tree Champions club account – an exclusive online hub at youngtreechampions.org where you can share your activities and interact with our national network of YTC schools.

3. Planning your project

In this section of the application, we will ask you about your plans for your YTC project. To receive resources such as tree packs, tech kit and a public speaking workshop, you will need to complete a whole-school project.

We will select which schools will be awarded specific resources based on need and the strength of your application (more details can be found in the [Support and Resources section](#)).

All schools that apply and successfully deliver their YTC project have the potential to be awarded Beacon School status. This means your school is excelling in being a Force for Nature, connecting, learning and sharing the power of trees and nature to tackle the climate and ecological crisis across the whole school community and nationally. Beacon School status will be awarded at our Force for Nature festival on 14 July 2021 and will have an important role to play in next year's activities.

Top tip! To help plan your project with your Young Tree Champions, why not complete a one-page project action plan - you can [download a template here](#). This will help you think through and answer the following questions concisely.

What is your project title?

A good project title is concise and memorable and gives a clear idea of what your project hopes to achieve (for example 'Tree-mendous Stonepark Primary' or 'Woodridge High's Tree Trail')



What matters most to your Young Tree Champions and your school as a whole?

Before you start your project application, make sure you've identified with your Young Tree Champions what matters most to them and the school as a whole when it comes to the climate and ecological crisis.

For example, your project might aim to:

- Reduce local air pollution
- Create a better home for nature in your school
- Help more children get active and connect with nature to improve their mental health
- Tackle deforestation
- Raise awareness of the climate/ecological crisis and the role of trees

If you're not sure yet, you might ask your Young Tree Champions to carry out a pupil and parent questionnaire to really understand what your school and parents care about most. **To help you get started, we recommend using our [questionnaire template](#).** To further help you decide and learn more about the broad themes of trees and health, climate, biodiversity and climate and ecological crisis, check out the resources on [our website](#).

Please summarise your project aim

In this question, you will need to summarise your project aim - how it addresses the environmental issues that matter most to your Young Tree Champions and what you hope to achieve together.

Remember, our Young Tree Champion ethos is **to be a Force for Nature by connecting, learning and sharing the power (value and role) of trees**. This should be at the heart of what you hope to achieve. It is also important to consider how your project will engage the whole school in your activities.

Example project aim

If your Young Tree Champions select mental health and nature connectedness as the issue that matters most to them, your project may aim to:

- Help students connect with each other and nature through sharing their special memories and feeling for trees and nature
- Learn about how trees and nature help can improve your mental health
- Share their activities through creating a display in the hall and producing a podcast to teach other students about the benefits of nature to mental health



Please select one or two themes that you feel align best with your project

Projects can focus on one or more of the following themes:

- Trees, health and well-being
- Trees and our climate
- Trees and nature
- Trees, our past and our future

Find out more about these themes [on our website](#).

How are you going to engage the whole school?

Your project should try to engage the whole school in some way to be part of your amazing project. This means curriculum-linked activities, campus activity (learning outdoors), community (engaging school community) and national network (posting on your YTC club space). You could:

- Engage with the school curriculum, for example through wider learning activities or creating a new resource to share across the school
- Plan on-campus activities such as tree planting, tree care or outdoor exercises
- Engage the school community through assemblies, planting events, updates on website and social media or a press release to the local paper. You can also engage with the national Young Tree Champion network using your new Young Tree Champion club space

CONNECT: What connection activities are you going to deliver to grow your Young Tree Champions' connection with each other, trees and nature?

In this question, we'd like to know how you'll inspire pupils to grow their connections, the way trees put down strong roots. For example, activities could include:

- Planting and caring for new trees in your grounds
- Collecting seeds from existing trees
- Sharing/reflecting on personal moments and memories in the outdoors
- Sharing feelings about being outdoors in nature and the future
- Noticing your heart rate and other physical and mental changes whilst in nature
- Defining your relationship with trees and nature, using your senses in different ways
- Noticing trees in different seasons, observing tree health and your own health

For ideas and inspiration, see our [activity inspiration guides](#) around the theme of connection.



LEARN: What activities are you going to deliver to learn about the power (value and role) of trees and nature to progress your project?

The learning activities for your YTC project should become part of your school curriculum. Doing this will help to engage the whole school in your project. Please describe examples of your activities and the curriculum links for specific subjects and associated topics. Activities may include specific lessons and a resource to share.

For inspiration, see the [Activities page](#) on our website. You can also seek ideas from our partners and other environmental initiatives – see page 8 for further details.

Keep the activities simple and achievable, using the natural resources to hand. Activities can be done as a club during lunchtime, or a class, or even a cross-curricula enquiry-based project for your year group centred on, for example, unlocking trees and our health.

SHARE: How are you going to share your project activities with your school community and the national network?

To grow our national #ForceForNature, we need Young Tree Champions to use their voices to speak up for trees and nature, to demonstrate they care in an emotive and passionate way and inspire their peers. Consider how you are going to share your project with the school and the wider community. If you select a public speaking workshop with Speakers Trust as part of your application, you will receive free teacher training and a pupil workshop to help your Young Tree Champions find their voice and become a #ForceForNature.

Examples might include:

- Providing updates during school assemblies
- Putting information on notice boards, the school website and/or newsletters to parents
- Creating a podcast, animation, video or musical performance
- Planning and delivering a school campaign to empower others to take action

You should also consider how you are going to share at a national level through your youngtreechampions.org club space - you might share a blog post, photos or lesson ideas, or a video with other YTC schools.



How are you going to measure your impact?

Throughout your YTC project, we really want schools to celebrate every achievement no matter how big or small. Remember every question, every activity, every action helps to grow your Force for Nature. Make sure you post and share all your activities (pictures, lesson ideas, opportunities, resources) on your club space, we will use this as evidence to assess your impact. Towards the end of your project, you will need to complete a [short project self-assessment](#) and return it to us.

The form mirrors your [action plan](#), so have the two forms in mind when planning your project. Please explain how you are going to embed your YTC project into your school improvement plan, in the curriculum, on campus and in the school community beyond the end of the project.

What wider programmes does your project contribute to?

We have been working hard to align the programme with key partners in the environmental education sector, including with Eco-schools and Learning through Landscapes amongst others. In this section, briefly explain how this project supports wider schools initiatives such as:

- [Eco-schools](#)
- [John Muir Nature Detectives](#) initiatives
- [Healthy schools](#) initiatives
- [Forest Schools](#)
- The Soil Association's [Food for Life](#) partnership
- The United Nations [Sustainable Development Goals](#)
- Well-being and/or [learning outside the classroom](#) initiatives
- [WWF learn to love nature](#)
- [UNEP Education and Environment](#)

4. Support and resources

We have a selection of resources and support we can offer schools that are applying to deliver a YTC project. On the application form, please tick the box for each resource you would like to apply for. We are here to help you deliver your project from start to finish and beyond. Specific project related questions can be sent to schools@treecouncil.org.uk.



How resources will be awarded

The resources will be awarded as part of a needs-based assessment of your project, so we ask you provide information such as percentage of students eligible for free school meals, number of people engaged in the project in and out of school (proportionately assessed) and your expected project impact. Schools that score highly are put forward to our expert panel to finalise selection.

If your school isn't selected for specific resources, we will continue to support you in reaching Beacon School status. The resources are being selected for those schools that need them most. To help schools that aren't selected for specific resources we are running a feedback day on the 19 March, this is a chance for you to email any questions you might have about why your school hasn't received resources. We will respond with feedback and tips to help you move forward and deliver an exciting project.

N.B. Given the pandemic, we are aware of the challenges to engaging pupils learning at home and are taking this into consideration.

Do you have permission and space to plant your trees?

It's important that you have the space and formal permissions to plant your trees before you apply. It may be worth checking your school improvement plan for any new proposed developments onsite.

Are you applying for a tree pack?

Our tree packs have been specially selected by our experts and award-winning suppliers Frank P Matthews. Your pack will consist of five different trees, grouped together according to their similar size. Here is some further information to help you plan where your trees should be planted in your school grounds:

- **Small** trees include a selection that will grow to between 5 - 10m in height and need to be planted between 3-5m apart. If you do not have any bare ground to plant them in, you can consider planting them in large planters. Species include holly, hawthorn, crab apple, flowering cherries and mountain ash.
- **Medium-sized** trees have been selected for schools with more space, for example, a playing field, wildlife area or hedgerow. These trees grow to 15m in height and need to be planted 5-8m apart. Species include field maple, white birch, flowering cherries, mountain ash and alder.



- **Large** trees that have been selected will grow over 15m in height over 20 years and need to be planted 15m apart with plenty of space to grow. Species include horse chestnut, sweet chestnut, beech, large-leaved lime and elm.

We have prepared further [information on the specific trees in each pack](#).

Your young trees will arrive 'bare-rooted' and ready for immediately planting out. Your pack will include stakes, wire guards and hessian ties to support the tree for the first 2-3 years of its life. You'll receive full planting and care instructions when your trees arrive.

New or existing trees in your school grounds are perfect for creating an interactive tree trail. This means that it's best to plant your trees in places where pupils in your school can easily access them. You may wish to use them in other ways to support the delivery of your project, like creating an outdoor learning space.

Are you applying for a tech kit?

Our tech kits are intended to help those schools with limited resources create a tree trail in their school grounds. The kit can also be used for speaking up for trees and nature sessions for your project, to unlock the science and wonder of trees by using the microscope camera, and to virtually travel the world with the Google cardboards VR headset. Schools will need access to a smart phone to make best use of the microscope camera and VR headset. The kit comes with an adaptor so you can plug the microscope camera into a tablet.

Are you applying for a public speaking workshop led by Speakers Trust?

Speakers Trust teacher training and pupil workshops are designed to give teachers the tools and skills to inspire their pupils to speak up for trees and nature and express their passion, in a confident and creative way. They are run by award-winning trainers from [Speakers Trust](#). Teachers that sign up will receive a comprehensive two-hour online training workshop, providing breakout sessions on oracy, story-telling, planning sessions and more, to prepare lead teachers in school to support in the delivery of the pupil workshops.

The pupil workshops are a full day (two x two-hour sessions) and will be tailored to support your school. Speakers Trust will contact successful schools directly to arrange an appropriate time for your workshop and plan the session accordingly. The day is likely to be delivered online to either your club of Young Tree Champions (5 - 10 children) or a class (max. 32 children).



5. Delivery information

All schools that request either trees, tech kits or public speaking workshops will be notified by **Wed 10 March 2021** if they have been successful.

Tree packs and tech kits will be dispatched on **Wed 24 and Thurs 25 March**. There will also be an option to receive your pack in the week commencing 19 April. Please also remember that deliveries must be made to manned sites, so ensure you note a delivery address where someone will be available to receive the packs during working hours.

If you are awarded a Speakers Trust teacher training workshop, these sessions will be arranged for 3:30-5pm on **Wed 17 and Thurs 18 March**. Speakers Trust will get in touch with you directly to arrange a preferred time for the pupil workshop.

6. Data protection and safeguarding

We will share the details you provide us with third parties such as our tree nursery, contractors, couriers and sponsors and anyone involved directly in the funding, delivery or monitoring of the Young Tree Champion programme. This is necessary to deliver your packs. The Tree Council, or a nominated partner, (for example, the tree nursery who is supplying your trees) may make contact to process your order. We will also keep in touch regularly by email, and occasionally by post, with relevant information and resources to help your school deliver the YTC programme. You can unsubscribe from these communications at any time by contacting us at schools@treecouncil.org.uk.

We will keep your data for up to three years, we will use it only in the ways we outlined above and observe all UK-GDPR and other relevant data legislation. Click the links to read our [Privacy Statement](#) and our comprehensive [Safeguarding Policy](#).

7. Summary

The summary of your application form will allow you to check and keep a record of all the information you have provided. Once you have submitted your form, you'll also receive a PDF of your application in an email confirmation.



8. Frequently asked questions

Can my school be involved in the Young Tree Champions programme without ordering a tree pack?

Yes – we will provide plenty of other resources and ways for your Young Tree Champions to connect, learn and share the power of trees.

Do I need to recruit my Young Tree Champions to help to complete the application form?

It would be useful to have recruited your Young Tree Champions, as your students will have great ideas for what you might do and any themes you may wish to focus on as a group. As a Force for Nature, they should have the opportunity to drive this YTC project. However, given the current pandemic we suggest the following:

- Engage with key worker children in-school or remotely with an existing eco-club, student council, afterschool club and put this project on the agenda
- Use this [Young Tree Champion questionnaire](#) to help decide what matters most to your Young Tree Champions and select a tree theme
- Discuss ideas for your activities to connect, learn and share your project, and fill in the [action plan template](#), you can then use this to complete the application form

Do I need landowner permission to plant my trees?

Yes, this is really important – please make sure you have written permission from the landowner for the proposed location to plant the trees before completing the application form. It may be worth checking your school improvement plan for any new proposed developments onsite.



How big will the trees become and how much space will they need to thrive?

The trees have been carefully selected according to their size when mature. You have a choice of tree packs - small, medium and large trees.

- Small trees will grow to 5-10m and need to be planted 3-5m apart
- Medium trees will grow to 10-15m and need to be planted 5 to 8m apart
- Large trees will grow over 15m and need to be 15m apart

Please note: It is not possible to select specific species from the list to create a bespoke pack.

Plant your trees where they can receive lots of sunlight and where the drainage is good. Also consider a location that is accessible to all and allows you to water your young trees and saplings regularly and easily in the first 2-3 years (near an outdoor tap).

What exactly does a tree pack contain?

Each tree pack consists of five mixed trees. The trees will be between 1 and 2 years old (approx. 1 - 1.5m tall) and will arrive 'bare-rooted' ready for immediately planting out. Your pack will include stakes, wire guards and hessian ties to support the tree for the first 2-3 years of its life. We will send you full instructions of how to plant and care for your trees nearer the time.

You can select one of the following tree packs, each containing five trees:

1. Small
2. Mix of small + medium
3. Medium
4. Mix of medium + large
5. Large

Your choice will be based on the area you have available to plant your trees. We have prepared further [information on the specific trees in each pack.](#)

The trees are perfect for creating a tree trail but you may wish to use them in other ways to support the delivery of your project – for example, to create a wildlife-friendly area or woodland classroom to support your project.



Our school doesn't have any green space – can we plant the trees in pots?

Our selection of small trees will grow to between 5 - 10m tall and need to be planted between 3-5m apart. If you do not have any bare ground within your school grounds, you can consider planting them in large planters. We can provide detailed instructions on the appropriate planter size. The species include holly, hawthorn, crab apple, flowering cherries and rowan. It's important to bear in mind that trees in planters will need extra care, especially with watering.

How do we keep our trees alive and healthy in the longer term?

When your tree packs arrive, you will need get them into the ground straight away and give them a good water – they'll be thirsty from their journey! Make sure you use the stakes, ties and guards to help protect your young trees from rabbits and strong winds. You will be provided with detailed instructions on how to plant and care for your trees.

Your Young Tree Champions will need to water the newly-planted trees for a year or two, especially when the weather is dry and during the Easter and Summer holidays. Consider consulting a local volunteer [Tree Warden](#) to help provide advice on caring for your trees.

What do the tech kits contain?

Young Tree Champion tech kits provide your young people with amazing resources with which to interact with the world of trees. The kit is designed to help you create an interactive trail, explore the science and wonder of your new or existing trees on your grounds and record a podcast to speak up for trees. See [support and resources section](#) for more details.

The kit consists of:

- One pair of headphones with an attached microphone
- A hand-held microscope camera
- Google cardboard VR headset
- Info sheet with a series of app recommendations to help you develop your trail

When will I receive my tree pack and / or tech kit?

Deliveries will take place on 24 and 25 March 2021 (Option for delivery w/c 19 April).



What is a public speaking workshop led by Speakers Trust?

A public speaking workshop led by Speakers Trust involves a teacher training workshop and a pupil workshop. Due to current restrictions, the workshops will take place online.

- Teacher training workshops are designed to inspire teachers to develop oracy within the curriculum and will include breakout sessions to facilitate questions. The session also helps to prepare teachers for their day of pupil workshops, which are to be delivered between April and June.
- Pupil workshops comprise two 2-hour sessions engaging the pupils in vocalising their personal journey to becoming a Force for Nature. These sessions can be delivered to a club group or whole class (up to 32 pupils). Speakers Trust will contact schools directly to arrange timings and to tailor the sessions.

When will the public speaking workshops led by Speakers Trust take place?

The Teacher Training Workshops are on set dates - 3:30pm-5pm on 17 or 18 March 2021. The pupil workshops will be arranged with the selected school after this date.

How much time will my Young Tree Champion project take to deliver?

This YTC project can be as big as you want to make it! We estimate typically that a lead teacher will need to allocate 4 to 6 days throughout the spring and summer term to deliver the project from application to completion although this will depend on the amount of support they receive.

It's important that senior management allocate time to an enthusiastic member of staff to lead the project (LSA, Teacher). The lead contact will need to complete the application process, recruit the Young Tree Champions and make sure there is a plan of activities in place to plant, connect, learn and share the power of trees and care for your trees.

Compared to growing annual plants like tomatoes and salads, your trees will require much less annual care once the trees are established. However, there is more to do in the first few years in order to get them established; they'll need to be watered regularly (even during school holidays in spring and summer), weeded and guarded for the first three years.



What is a Beacon School?

Beacon Schools are determined once you have successfully completed your project and submitted a project self-assessment form. To achieve Beacon School status your schools needs to demonstrate in your self-assessment and posts on your club space that you are excelling in connecting, learning and sharing the power of trees and nature both in school and at a national level (by being active on your club account). Beacon Schools will be invited to attend and be awarded at the Force for Nature festival in July 2021.