

PROJECT: EDUCATION ARTICLE

WRITER: Silvia Catten

Connecting Kids with Nature's Wonders

Project Learning Tree (PLT) is all about sparking curiosity and fostering a love for the environment for students of all ages. Forget dry lectures—PLT offers an exciting K-12 curriculum that dives deep into the magic of forests, ecosystems, climate change, and biodiversity. Through hands-on activities and outdoor adventures, students not only learn about these important topics but also develop a deep connection with nature. For educators who want to level-up their science teaching, PLT provides the training, resources, and tools to blend nature with lively outdoor learning. With a mission to cultivate young minds to make informed choices and take action, PLT is shaping the next generation of environmental stewards who will help protect and preserve our planet for years to come.

Empowering Environmental Educators

Environmental education isn't just about what happens in the classroom, it's about building a community of teachers that are dedicated to shaping a brighter (and more sustainable) future. With more than 1,200 workshops annually, PLT has an incredible network of state partners, offering a dedicated coordinator for every state. These coordinators don't just lead workshops—they're local experts who are passionate about nature and provide tailored resources and guidance for activities that resonate with the communities they serve. Whether you prefer in-person sessions, online courses, or a mix of both, PLT has you covered. Training programs are designed for teachers, student teachers, informal educators (think zookeepers, park rangers, and nature center staff), and youth leaders, or anyone who wants to inspire kids through nature.

GreenSchools

PLT's GreenSchools program is a student-led initiative that gives kids the opportunity to roll up their sleeves and really make a difference. Students dive deep into eco-friendly projects that tackle issues like energy, water, waste, and environmental quality. Using STEM skills learned from PLT curriculum, students analyze data, brainstorm solutions, and put real-world improvements into action for their schools. The impact of these kid-friendly investigations often results in promoting healthy habits or money-saving improvements, empowering students to do more to reduce their school or community's environmental footprint.

Lessons that Inspire

At the heart of PLT's award-winning curriculum are innovative teaching materials that engage and motivate young naturalists. PLT works hand in hand with trusted partners and sponsors to create quality curriculum that evolves with a changing world. Backed by leading forest-focused and environmental organizations, PLT curriculum brings endless ideas for fun and easy-to-use lesson plans in nature. Want to teach about a tree's life cycle or discover why leaves turn yellow in the fall? Lessons include hands-on activities, exploration guides, and meaningful learning experiences to help students learn about the world around them through the lens of trees, wildlife, landscape, and climate. Teaching with PLT helps every student develop the knowledge, awareness, and appreciation about the great outdoors, to not only teach children about nature, but to inspire them to care for it, too.