**The Lorax**

*Julietta Sorensen Kass* | *70 min* |

**OVERVIEW**

**Description**

Participants will listen to a story about a creature who speaks for the trees and what happens when people do not hear his message. Participants will also be given the chance to plant their own trees and leave a message with them. \*could be modified by planting and taking home bean sprouts\*

**Learning Outcomes**

* Understand that large-scale environmental change starts with small individual actions
* Review the care requirements for saplings
* Establish a relationship with an individual tree
* Learn some of the characteristics of native tree species

**Outline**

1. Outdoor Story Time (15 min)
   1. Read “The Lorax” by Dr. Seuss
2. Reflect (5-10 min)
   1. Is there a Lorax around here? Who speaks for the trees now?
3. Meet your tree (25 min)
4. Plant a tree (20 min)
   1. Participants plant trees
   2. Speak for the trees

**MATERIALS**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Item** | **Quantity per participant** |
| Book, The Lorax (Dr. Seuss) | 1 book for group |
| Tree Saplings | 1 sapling |
| Spade / trowel | 1 spade |
| Tree identification guides or documents | 8 books/documents for group |
| Personal technology (optional) | 1 item (optional) |
| Strips of paper (6 cm wide by 20 cm long) | 1 strip of paper |
| Pens/Pencils | 1 pen/pencil |
| Thread/yarn (30 cm) | 1 piece of yarn |

**KEY INFORMATION**

* Read an excerpt from “All About Minnesota’s Forests and Trees: A Primer”, provided here in Appendix A.
* You’ll need to arrange to get saplings, and then gain permission to plant them. Educational institutions (such as Dalhousie University) are often good spots for this. You’ll also want to confirm it is safe to dig in that area. A reputable source for tree saplings in Nova Scotia is Baldwin Nurseries <https://www.baldwinnurseries.ca/>

**LESSON PLAN & PROCEDURE**

**Outline**

1. Outdoor Story Time (15 min)
2. Read “The Lorax” by Dr. Seuss
   * Make a circle somewhere outdoors, near trees
   * Before reading, show children the story cover
   * Ask children to guess what the story is about. Have they heard this story, or watched the movie?
   * Read the story out loud to the group
3. Reflect (5-10 min)
4. Brainstorm
   * Discuss: Who can speak for the trees now? Why do we need trees here in the city, and not just out in the forest? If you were given a seed, or a baby tree, could you care for it and help it grow?
   * Discuss the needs of a sapling (see “How to plant saplings” in the journal document, pages 3-4)
   * Saplings need a lot of water when they are first getting established. They’ll also need sunlight, warmth, and minerals
5. Meet your tree (25 min)
6. Give each participant their own sapling, along with the question sheet in Appendix B (also in the journal under “Meet your tree” page 20). \*Make sure participants know these trees will be planted today, and not be taken home. This is because not all families have homes with property on which they are allowed to plant, nor are all guardians comfortable with the commitment of caring for a tree. If participants are upset by not being able to take the tree home, encourage them to ask their family about getting one, or visiting this one often\*
   * Provide participants with resources about their tree species and images of what it will look like when it “grows up”. They will use this to fill out “meet your tree”. Possible resources include the previously used tree guides and Google.
   * Filling out the sheet is not a must, and it will be more meaningful to some participants than others. The important part is that they think about the questions it poses
7. Share and discuss (10 min)
   * Put participants into pairs or small groups and invite them to introduce their trees to one another. Invite them to share some of the things they’ve learned about their tree (refer to the worksheet for conversation starters)
   * As a group again, ask participants to answer some of the questions by a show of hands
8. Tree planting (20 min)
9. Follow the instructions in Appendix A for the tree-planting protocol. It is also in the journal document, pages 3-4
   * + In the agreed location, demonstrate how to dig an appropriately-sized hole for the seedlings
     + Help participants dig and plant their own trees
     + Using buckets, water bottles, and other containers, give the new trees a drink
10. Provide participants with long strips of paper, which they can write a message on. It can be anything they like. Perhaps the name of the tree and the date it was planted, for maybe a message to the world about the importance of trees. Or just a happy face. They will tie this paper to their tree using the piece of yarn.
    * + - This is a good opportunity for discussion:
        - Why don’t we want to use plastic-coated paper? (It doesn’t degrade, and could become litter)
        - Why shouldn’t we worry that our message won’t last forever? (Because speaking for the trees isn’t something you do once and forget about, it’s something you continue to do for your whole life. And the life of your tree!)

**Debrief**

At the end of the day, save time for participants to introduce their family members to their tree. It might be a good idea to notify guardians ahead of time, that their children will have something special to show them. This way they will be prepared to stay an extra 5 minutes

**REFERENCES & RESOURCES**

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Fowells, H. A. (1965). Silvics of Forest Trees of the United States. U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service. 762 pp. Available online: <http://www.na.fs.fed.us/spfo/pubs/silvics_manual/table_of_contents.htm>

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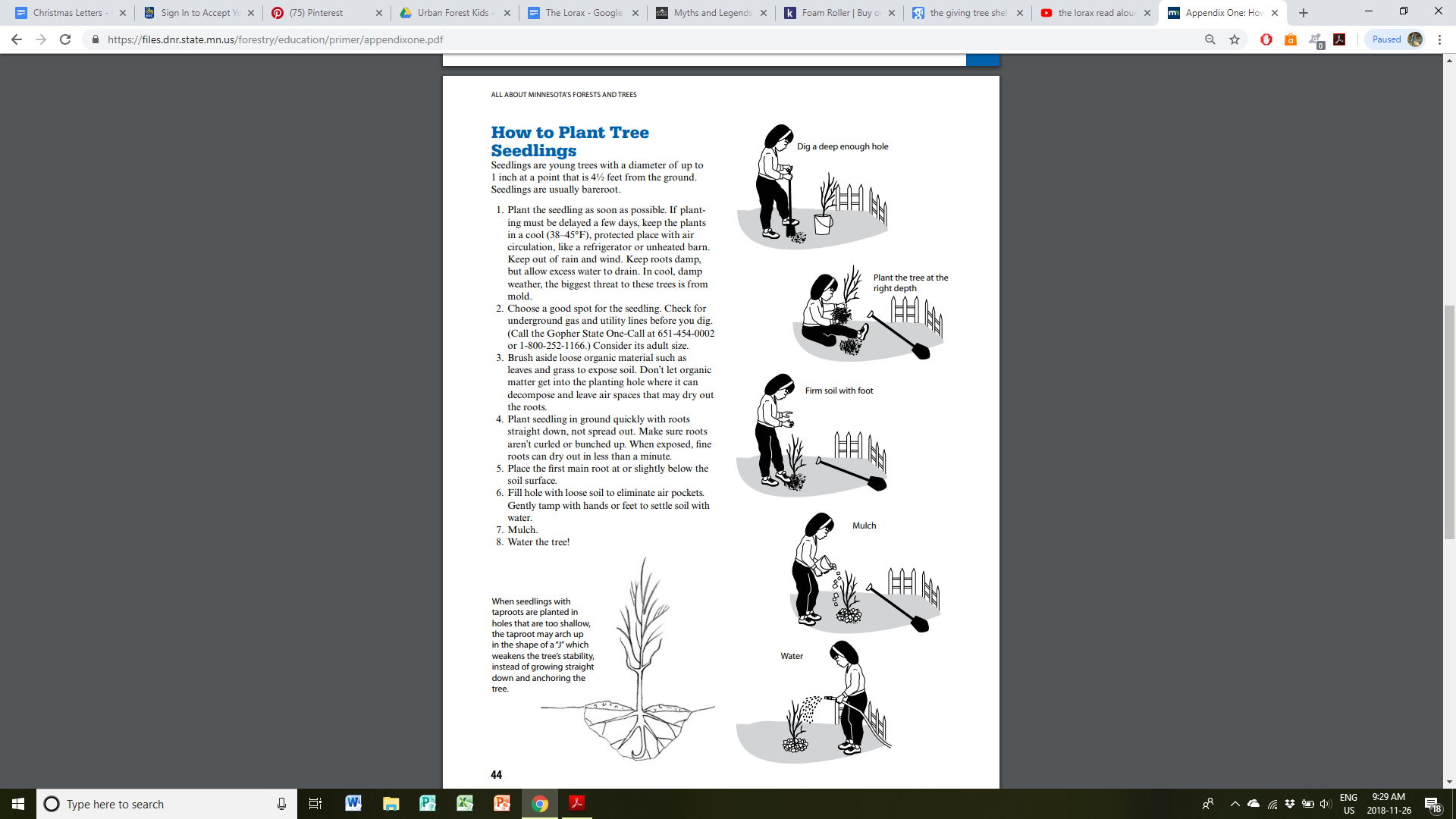
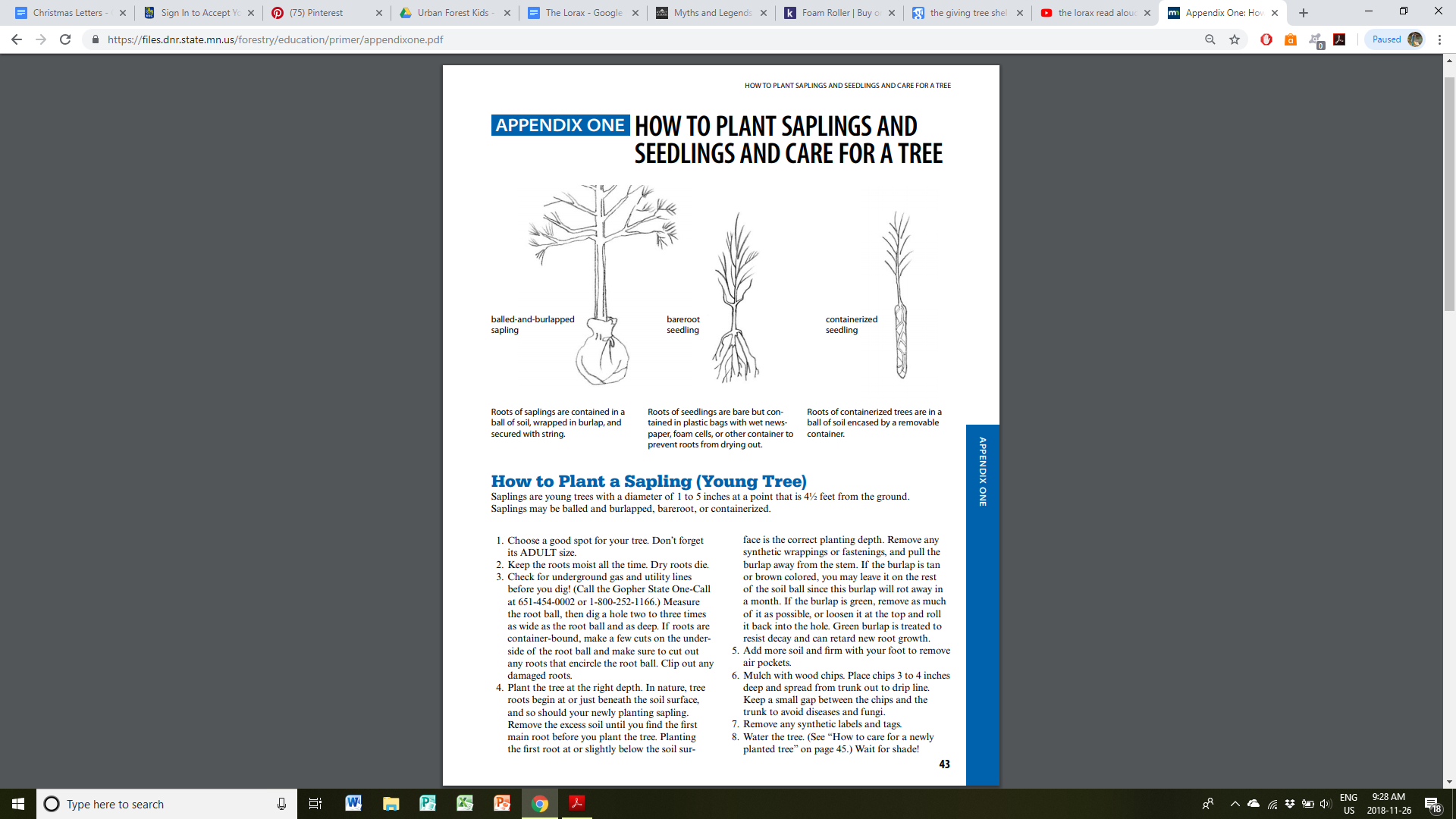
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Steenberg, J. W., Duinker, P. N., & Charles, J. D. (2013). The neighbourhood approach to urban forest management: The case of Halifax, Canada. *Landscape and Urban Planning*, *117*, 135-144.Duffey, L. & Hoff, M. (2008). All about Minnesota's forests and trees: A primer. Division of Forestry, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, St. Paul, MN.

**SIMILAR STORIES (Further reading)**

* Wangari’s Trees of Peace: A True Story from Africa, Jeanette Winter
* Little Tree, Loren Long
* Crinkleroot’s Guide to Knowing the Trees, Jim Arnosky
* Miss Maple’s Seeds, Eliza Wheeler
* Be a City Nature Detective, Peggy Kochanoff
* Wishtree, Katherine Applegate

**Appendix A**

**Appendix B**

Meet your Tree!

What do you call your tree? (name) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

What do scientists call your tree? (species) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

When are you planting your tree? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Is your tree deciduous or coniferous? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

An interesting fact about this species is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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My favourite thing about my tree is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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This is what my tree looks like today: