



# SA URBAN FORESTS MILLION TREES PROGRAM

## GROW A GREAT SCHOOL

## GRANT GUIDELINES

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### INTRODUCTION

The State Government of South Australia is committed to ensuring Adelaide's future as a modern city with an enviable reputation for the quality of its urban environment. The **SA Urban Forests – Million Trees Program** was established in 2003 and is dedicated to planting three million local native trees and associated understorey species across Greater Adelaide by 2014.

The program is a major investment in the future of Greater Adelaide and will see the amenity and ecological value of open spaces enhanced with these plantings. The Program builds on years of best practice remnant vegetation protection through the Urban Forest Biodiversity Program (UFBP), which was established in 1997.

The Million Trees Program is committed to the vision of Adelaide as a clean, green city that leads the way in ecological sustainability. **Grow a Great School (GAGS)** is an initiative of the Million Trees Program that engages schools and their communities to play a key role in reducing the physical impact of our city upon the natural environment. It provides students with the opportunity to learn through action orientated, hands on experience to conserve local native biodiversity.

Grow a Great School projects provide extensive opportunities for discovering and exploring the original flora and fauna of the Adelaide Plains. Using native plants that once occurred in your area means that you can help bring back a small piece of Adelaide's original bush in your school grounds.

The potential benefits, both environmental and educational are as varied as the projects themselves - see below for some of the possible outcomes. If you have the energy and drive to take on a garden project we can support you with funding and technical expertise. Possible outcomes include:

- Helping recover and protect our native biodiversity by increasing habitat for native wildlife
- Reducing greenhouse gases
- Improving air and water quality
- Reducing water consumption
- Creating amenity spaces
- Improving awareness and understanding of sustainability issues
- Building better partnerships and involving communities, and
- Helping improve skill levels and capacity to conserve our natural resources.

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#### For further information

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Government  
of South Australia

## ELIGIBLE PROJECTS

The following criteria must be met in order to ensure projects are eligible to receive funding. Projects must:

- Use only indigenous plants propagated from a local seed source.
- Involve more than one class (preferably a whole-of-school approach).
- Have written support from the school Principal and Groundsperson (if the school retains that position) that the project will be managed for a minimum of three years from the time of planting (e.g. weeds removed and only indigenous plants used).
- Submit a project plan for the site detailing the actions, timing of works, plant order and project site plan within the designated period of the funding.

Priority will be given to those projects that are (i) well designed with a detailed landscape plan (ii) will be integrated into the schools curriculum (iii) have opportunities for community education and (iv) provide environmental and educational outcomes.

## WHAT CAN I APPLY FOR?

Funding for schools is generally for amounts up to \$1,000 and can be used for the purchase of seed or seed collection, the purchase of indigenous plants, tree guards, stakes, hole digging, mulch and weed removal.

Applicants are encouraged to match the contribution (1:1). This may include money and/or in-kind contributions, such as volunteer time.

## CONDITIONS OF FUNDING

Upon approval of your application, you will be asked to sign and return a funding agreement.

Applications must be received by 15<sup>th</sup> **September 2010**.

What follows below is a guide to the application form which is designed to help you understand what is required for each section. In conjunction with the demonstration application you should have all the information you need. If in doubt about any of the information required from your school please ring the Grow a Great School Schools Project officer, **Catherine Mossop on 8278 0605**.

## GUIDE TO THE APPLICATION FORM

We love schools to 'Get Involved' with the **Million Trees – Grow a Great School (GAGS)** initiative and we are always trying to find ways to make the application process more straightforward.

While the application form may at first appear somewhat daunting there is a very good reason for the information that we require. By the time you have finished filling out the application you will have considered and planned every aspect of the development of a native school garden. It will be a garden that is so much more than just a pretty patch of green; it can become an educational and environmental asset to the school and the wider community.

Remember that:

- the plants in your school garden will be a tangible and precious link to a fast disappearing past.
- the seedlings that your school will use are not mass produced by an interstate nursery. Your garden species list, based on what once grew in your neighbourhood, will be collected by passionate growers from remnant plants as close to your site as possible.
- this means that your project will be recreating plant associations that are as close to the original as is possible today.
- those growers will propagate that seed over the coming summer using all their skill and knowledge to ensure that the planning you put in now will become a reality next winter.
- this is why we have such long lead in times but also because you need to prepare the site, manage weed control and hopefully involve your students in the planning.

We ask that you consider your proposed garden as the equivalent of a collection of rare and valuable paintings. Your garden will grow into a genetic seed bank that can be used to maintain the original genetic diversity that once existed in the region. This will be a collection whose value will only be diminished by the planting of non provenance plants, that is plants where the source of the original seed stock is unknown or from another state or region. You wouldn't add fake paintings to a collection of old masters so think of your garden as a wonderful opportunity to create a unique collection. Your native garden will allow you and many generations of your students to catch a glimpse of our past and learn about how we can all grow a great future.

Use these guidelines along with the demonstration application form to help you plan and identify all the tasks and issues that you need to consider. Once you have finished the application you will have documented what you intend to do, developed a list of local plants, planned your garden and timed all your tasks. You will have identified the educational benefits as well as all the project costs and project partners.

## THE APPLICATION

The following headings relate to the sections in the application form and when considered along with the demonstration application should help you deal with any difficulties you encounter. Other supporting documents that will help you include the **Troubleshooting Q & A's**.

### 1 Project Details

Give your project an interesting or exciting name. This will help to encourage ownership and participation by the wider school community and identify it as something other than a basic garden bed. Use the name to help show what your school hopes to get out of the garden. Call it an *Indigenous Medicine Trail* or a *Wild Discovery Learning Patch*. Describe the project and include all the elements and features that you hope to have in the garden as well as the outcomes you hope to see flowing from the establishment of such a garden.

Don't forget to include the expected educational uses as this is why we help schools to establish such sites. If you simply say that the school needs some free plants to enhance a tired old garden bed then your chances of receiving our support are likely to be reduced.

We understand that plans can change and evolve over time but what we want to see is an indication of what you intend to do and the reasons for doing it.

### 2 Applicant Details

This section is largely self explanatory but what is important is that the project coordinators are identified and contact details provided. We require at least two names in case one of the contacts leaves the school or is no longer able to manage the project. You are welcome to include other names including that of your groundsperson, or any parents involved.

As successful projects are usually driven by motivated members of staff, it is vital that those people are aware of what is expected of them and are able to undertake the work. You need to be aware that there is a substantial amount of coordination and organising required to develop a garden project and it is much easier if that workload is shared.

### 3 Site Evaluation

Measuring the site will allow you to accurately map it. An accurate map will enable you to calculate how many plants you will need and to begin planning paths and landscape elements such as open areas, ponds, thick areas of spiky plants to deter humans but attract small native birds, and nesting boxes. Consider the following when working up your map and plan:

- landscape architects always begin by considering the issue of 'circulation', that is, the need for the movement of people through the site.
- you may want to consider a path that will allow students to access the garden. Some schools include a clear space that will allow a whole class to sit or meet in the garden for teacher-led activities.
- other considerations may include vehicle access for future work by contractors or trades people.

- include in your plan landscape elements such as rocks and logs that will provide habitat for invertebrates and lizards (keep dead timber away from buildings to discourage termites).
- any low lying areas may work as bog gardens or as a site for frog or fish ponds (check local regulations in relation to safety issues and the need for fencing).

Once you have these features factored into your plan you can start adding plants. Begin by placing trees and large shrubs. Draw trees and large bushes at their mature size so that you are planning for the long term but don't be afraid to overplant the site to some degree as not all seedlings may survive and it is easy to remove some plants if overcrowding or shadowing becomes an issue. Don't be afraid to clump some species to create thickets and small stands as is often the case in nature.

Once you have placed the larger trees and shrubs you can put in the understorey species, remembering that many of these species live in a dappled light environment in the natural bushland setting. Plan some areas as open grassland spots where hardy sun-tolerant species can flourish and where butterflies and seed-eating birds will come to graze. Plant grasses, sedges and groundcovers in clumps; putting 30 grass seedlings into one spot will create a wonderful garden element and will once again mimic what occurs in the wild.

See the example plan that is attached to the demonstration application form as an example of what is required. To create a site plan you will need to have identified what species you intend to use and have some idea of the size and shape of the species when they are mature. You can find this information from local plant books or from the website (also see the local native species selection below and the **Troubleshooting Q & A's**).

If in doubt about the eventual size of your garden plants use the following as a guide :

- trees : allow between 4m – 10m spread for trees depending on type (eg. Redgums will eventually be very large but like many native species they will have a thin crown casting a mottled shade, Native Pines on the other hand are smaller with a more dense and compact form)
- large Shrubs : allow a spread of 2m –3m
- small Shrubs and Ground Covers : allow 1m – 2m for ground covers.
- Grasses, herbs and sedges : plant 30cm apart in clumps.

These are anticipated spreads, and for trees it may be 10 – 20 years before they can get to that size. Because a tree on your site map will have a spread of up to 10m does not mean that you cannot plant anything under it, if you look at original bushland you will note that many understorey plants grow very well under even dense canopies.

Other site observations can include what weeds are present. Some weeds are easier to get rid of than others, and if we know what problems the site has we can offer the best and safest methods for dealing with them. Always let us know about any remnant native plants on the site as these are very important in the urban landscape today. If the soil has a history of disturbance or is clearly of a sand, clay or deep loam type this will help us to help you make the right choices of what will do well on the site. The aspect or amount of sun that the site gets is also an important factor in determining what will do well.

If your site contains any remnant trees or other local native plants make sure you tell us. With so little of our original bushland left we get very excited by the prospect of rehabilitating patches that contain original species.

#### 4 Previous Participation and School Environmental Education Involvement

Once you have been through the process of establishing a native garden with local native provenance seedlings you will be aware of many of the issues. It helps us to know what experience you and the school has had in this area.

Some school gardens are stand alone projects that may be the beginning point for a journey into a range of sustainability initiatives or the garden may be part of a broader environmental focus. It helps us to see where the school is at and perhaps where it is heading if we are given some idea of what other activities the school is involved with. It also lets us know how involved the students will be in environmental activities. What we are after are sites that will not only grow great gardens but schools that will grow a greater environmental awareness and capacity within their community.

To do this we ask you to indicate how the project will complement your current learning activities either through curriculum links or practical activities. We hope that this question will encourage you to think about new and creative ways to make your garden an integral part of the school and the students' development. Be creative! Some maths teachers use plant survival rates and seed germination numbers as a way of incorporating the garden into the classroom.

The final question in section 4 is intended to give us a further idea of your school's environmental journey. These questions are for our benefit and are not scored in the grant application assessment process; that is your school's success is not dependent on having an environmental education strategy.

#### 5 Anticipated Project Benefits

Check the demonstration application for an idea of what environmental benefits such a garden can generate. Consider each aspect of your site and think about how it fits into the bigger picture. Your site may appear small and unimportant but if you look further afield you will begin to notice what is happening in local parks and creeklines, in the Adelaide Parklands and along the coast. Your proposed project could become a part of a much larger scheme that works on various scales.

We also want to know what the educational benefits of your project will be. This is where you can show how your garden will be much more than a bit of native greenery. Tell us how you intend to involve your school community in the site and what kind of educational learnings you anticipate coming from it. See the demonstration application for a few ideas and don't be afraid to think 'Big Picture' or long-term. One of our GAGS schools is now propagating seedlings from the seed collected in their garden and using these for planting at nearby revegetation sites and in students' home gardens. Other schools use their sites to involve local Indigenous community groups in sharing plant knowledge and cultural heritage.

#### 6 Plant Species Selection and Plant Order

See the **What plants do we need?** section of the **Troubleshooting Q & A's** as this will explain the importance of local provenance and what a 'plant association' is. Every school yard across Adelaide sits on what was once a type of bushland. The type of bushland that existed is determined by the suite of plant species that originally grew in that area. The bush gardens we fund are limited (to a certain degree) to those original species for any given site.

The SA Urban Forests – Million Trees Program can provide you with a simplified list of the original species that once occurred in your neighbourhood. This list has been reduced to those plants which are currently available from specialised native plant growers. The list contains the more hardy species ideal for school gardens.

You can also go to the Urban Forest/Backyards for Wildlife web site at [www.backyards4wildlife](http://www.backyards4wildlife) to utilise the species map for the whole of metropolitan Adelaide. This can be found under the **Adelaide's Biodiversity** section. Here you can click on your school suburb location and see a list of all the species that are believed to have been a part of your local plant association. Many of these species are hard to grow and may no longer survive in a garden setting due to changes in micro climate conditions or altered soil profiles. You are welcome to use this larger list but you will need to check with a local grower about their availability.

If your Grow a Great School grant application is successful you need to place your garden plant species list (contained in your application) as an order with a grower. This needs to be done by the end of October. The more time you give your grower the more chance they will have in finding local seed and propagating it over the warmer summer months. A plant order placed with a grower in February may be impossible to fulfil if that seed has already fallen or blown away over the Christmas holidays. Even if they have seed in stock, a grower may have missed the warmest months for propagating. To ensure you are going to get the best array of species on your list and the plants are at an optimal stage for planting out **make sure you get your plant order in to a grower before the end of November** or ask the GAGS Schools Project Officer to help with your order.

See the list of native plant growers online at [www.backyards4wildlife](http://www.backyards4wildlife) (there is a link from the front page).

The cost of plants varies from grower to grower. In the grant application we have suggested allowing \$2 a seedling as this will generally cover the cost. If your project requires a large number of plants you may like to get in touch with a local grower to determine the true costs of seedlings and enable you to stretch your proposed grant budget. Some growers can provide plants in the form of cell trays and this is a very economical way to buy grasses and sedges as a tray will contain up to 100 small seedlings. Cell trays need to be kept moist as they can dry out very quickly but they are a great way to plant areas thickly.

## 7 Project Plan

See the demonstration application for an example of what a **work plan** and **timing of works** schedule should look like. These two tables, when properly filled out, will become an important guide and calendar for the tasks that are required to successfully finish your project. Working out all the tasks, prioritising and scheduling them at this early stage allows you to understand what is required and to plan those actions. Having a clear idea of 'what' needs to be done and 'when' makes it easier for you to involve the whole school community.

Check the **work plan** and **timing of works** in the demonstration application and you will see that many of the tasks are seasonal such as placing your plant order before the end of October. Weed control needs to be done well before planting but can depend upon how wet the autumn has been. Pre-digging your planting holes is best done just prior to planting to avoid safety issues or the collapse of the holes, but again, your planting date will depend on how early or late the breaking rains are. Even the plants you receive from your grower may depend on the type of summer we have had. You need to be aware of these variable factors but generally you can follow the order of tasks as outlined in the demonstration application.

If your site needs to be cleared of non native trees or rubbish then you need to factor these actions into your work schedule. Do not wait until the planting season is upon you as invariably there will be too much to do and you will have generated little ownership or enthusiasm from your school community. Try to engage parents through working bees and wherever possible involve your student body.

One of the prerequisites for gaining a grant from us is that you need to show us what the monies are to be spent on. This information helps make up your project **budget**. However part of our funding arrangements require that you at least match any monies granted by us. This can be done by the school through financial input into the project. It can also include 'in-kind support' by staff, groundspersons and adult labour (student labour cannot be counted).

Adult labour can be valued at \$25.00 an hour so that if a groundsperson spends 2 hours spraying and controlling weeds that is a contribution of \$50.00. Likewise if two teachers help spread mulch for two hours that is a \$100.00 in kind contribution. It is not hard to match the funding you are seeking from us and don't forget to involve your local council who may be able to donate rocks, logs and mulch.

## 8 Monitoring, Evaluation and Maintenance

We hope that your garden will become very much a part of your school and be used by generations of future students, staff and the school community . To ensure your project gets off to a good start we insist that your school maintain and monitor the garden for at least 3 years. Engaging your students in watching the garden grow and measuring the changes that occur is a great way to grow both a greater understanding and ownership in the project.

Monitoring which plants do best, which need to be looked after more, noting what insects, birds and lizards visit the site in the early stages will give you some baseline data with which to compare future observations. Setting up photopoint spots is a terrific way to measure change. particularly when that change is incremental over time. Some schools use all these facts and figures in maths class or science studies.

The final part of this section relates to your school's unique vision for what you want from your garden. Tell us what special ideas or features you plan to include. Some of the special features from previous Grow a Great School project sites include the following:

- ponds and bog gardens for frog and tadpole habitat
- stormwater creeklines planted with sedges to clean the run-off
- sitting circles with logs or boulders for a class to sit on for outdoor learning activities
- quiet places for students to sit and contemplate
- habitat gardens with rocks and logs in sunny spots to attract lizards
- butterfly friendly gardens with host plants for caterpillars and nectar plants for the butterflies
- a special school tree with a large log in front of it for all future student school photographs
- bush tucker gardens that can be integrated with Indigenous cultural awareness
- bush trails with signage and brochures developed by students to help users identify species
- ephemeral wetlands
- Japanese gardens using local native species
- modern formal gardens

- grasslands with flowering meadow style native plants
- woodlands with understorey.

We are keen to promote GAGS projects in our newsletters, in public displays and talks and on our web site, so please tick the box and maybe your project will end up as a case study that will inspire other schools.

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## **9      Outputs**

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This section is pretty self evident and allows us to collate information from your site.

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## **10     Applicant Declaration**

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This section is also self evident and confirms that your school agrees to carry out the project as detailed in the application. We require signatures from three members of staff to show that the school principal and groundsperson are aware and supportive of the project.