

Virginia Growing Native Projects



Three Rockingham County Schools Grow Native Trees

Cacapon Institute partnered with Boxerwood Nature Center, Lexington, VA, to expand the Potomac Headwaters Leaders of Watersheds Growing Native program outside of the Potomac River Watershed. Boxerwood Nature Center and the three Rockingham County schools are located in the James River Watershed—a direct drainage to the Chesapeake Bay. This led to the installation of the fenced grow-out station to serve the county.



Schools in the program included: Central Elementary, Fairfield Elementary, and Waddell Elementary.

The 4th grade students had three one-hour classroom education lessons led by Boxerwood staff, Lisa Conners. The

education lessons were presented as a training program to the students in order to encourage full participation and ownership for the program. Students had to earn a tree cookie at the conclusion of each of the three lessons to demonstrate the tree knowledge needed to plant one-year-old tree seedlings in mobile pots. Each school succeeded and arrived fully prepared to plant a native tree with Cacapon Institute staff.

On May 19th, Waddell Elementary and Fairfield Elementary potted their tree seedlings and Central Elementary followed on May 31st. In total, 194 students planted 125 native tree seedlings that are currently thriving in the community grow-out station at Fairfield Elementary School.

Each tree was labeled by the students with a code and species. These codes are on file to allow students to check-in on their tree with the students at Fairfield Elementary. Additionally, data was



collected on the height, assigned tree name, species, and age of tree.

As these trees continue to grow, they will outgrow the community grow-out station and will be released to the schools and community for planting throughout the county. The trees will provide a number of environmental benefits as they mature.

