

TIPS FOR WORKING WITH THE MEDIA

Promoting your National Tree Day event through the media is a great way to rally volunteers and let the community know about the exciting project you have organised.

Who are your local media outlets?

- Local newspapers
- Local radio and TV stations
- Community & business newsletters
- Websites or blogs promoting events and activities in your community

How to approach your local media

Media outlets are really supportive of local events but you need to provide them with plenty of notice. Contact them by phone first to tell them about your event and then send them a media release.

For newspapers, ask to speak to the editor. If you're calling the television station, ask to speak to the chief-of-staff, and for radio, talk to the producer of the specific show you wish to target. For websites and blogs, simply send the owner or author an email with the information you would like them to publish.

When you speak to a media contact, keep your chat short and snappy, limiting conversation to the exciting community event you have planned and when and where it is taking place. When explaining your project to the media, keep in mind that most reporters only have a basic understanding of environmental issues so it's important to use simple language and avoid technical terminology.

After the phone call, send the contact a media release to support your case (ask for an email address when you're on the phone to them). A template media release, which allows you to insert details of the school's event, is available on your Coordinators home page <http://treeday.planetark.org/coords/media>. Simply tailor it for your event before sending.

Approach the media with plenty of lead-time and remember to ask the media contact what their deadline is when you speak to them. By working with their editorial schedule, you will maximise your chances for coverage.

Story Angles

Make sure you tell the media that your story has a local focus and remind them what a great cause it's all in aid of – National Tree Day!

Other story angles that might get the media's attention include:

- A tree planting that commemorates a special event or individual in the community
- Numbers and statistics – maybe your group is planting its 10,000th seedling, has been participating in National Tree Day for 10 years, or expects a large number of people to attend
- Benefits to the community and environment – if your event aims to restore or increase habitat for a particular native animal or repair an important natural asset, tell the media about it
- A Family Fun Day – if your event is also offering kids' activities such as face painting and craft, or a barbecue lunch, consider promoting it as a great day out for the family
- VIPs at your event – perhaps your local MP or Mayor or a well-known identity in your community has committed to attend your event. Make sure you check with the VIP's office for permission before contacting the media with this kind of story.

Images

Providing local newspapers with great photo opportunities or sending them a good quality photo after your event will greatly increase your chances of securing a story. In some cases, the local newspaper might send a photographer out to the site. It varies with each publication and its resources. If they don't, you can send one or more of your own images to the newspaper after the event. Just make sure you provide high-resolution photos (at least 1MB in size). Remember to capture:

- Local heroes and VIPs
- The official planting

Remember to provide the newspaper with the full name of everyone in your photos, along with your contact details should they wish to obtain a quote from you.

Good luck!