

TreeProject

Safety at Planting Days

Thank you for coming to a TreeProject planting day. Your participation will make a valuable contribution to our revegetation program and is much appreciated. It is very important to remember to **sign in** and **sign out** at all TreeProject's planting days. This will enable us to know who attended as well as to make sure that they left the site safely.

To make the day a safe and enjoyable one for all, you are asked to take a moment to consider safety issues and to read this note which addresses the potential hazards associated with this type of activity.

Here are some **do's** and **don'ts** to consider.

1. Personal fitness

Consider your fitness level and assess what your physical capabilities are. Planting can be a tiring activity, especially if the ground is hard or the terrain steep.

Do some warm-up exercises before starting work.

Do select a tool (eg a mattock) that matches your size and strength.

Do take regular rests.

Do ask for help with lifting and carrying if you need it.

Do tell a ranger or someone else if you have a pre-existing medical condition that may cause you problems.

Do tell someone if you start to feel unwell.

Don't overextend yourself.

Don't set yourself targets for numbers of plants to be planted. Work at your own comfortable rate.

Don't battle on if you are feeling tired or become unwell. Take a rest.

2. Being prepared for all possible environmental conditions

Challenging weather can arise at any time of year. Victoria's notoriously changeable weather should not be underestimated.

Do use sun screen, wear a hat, gloves and removable layers of clothing.

Don't come unprepared for weather changes.

3. Working in steep or rough areas

Many planting days are held on slopes or on ground that is uneven. There is always a chance of slipping or falling, so care should be taken when moving about.

Do assess the terrain before starting, taking note of steep areas, any hazards such as protruding roots, surface condition – gravelly or slippery, etc.

Do consider the consequences of a fall – will you land in the river or on rocks.

Do carry tools in a way that if you fall you won't impale yourself on them.

Do err on the side of caution – one moment of recklessness may be regretted for a long time.

Please watch where you are stepping.

Do wear sturdy shoes or boots with good tread.

Don't be heroic and attempt to work on slopes that make you feel uncomfortable or unsafe.

Don't carry heavy items like boxes of plants on steep or uneven ground.

4. Working close to others

When working hard it is easy to become self-absorbed and not notice who is around you. Remember, you have a responsibility to protect your fellow workers.

Do always be aware of who is around you.

Do keep an eye on the others in your vicinity, especially children, to ensure they don't get into difficulties.

Do make sure that you know who your point of contact is in case of an emergency i.e the accredited Supervisor on the day who is familiar with the site and the process.

Don't swing a mattock, hammer, or other tool, without checking who is around you.

5. Handling dangerous materials and objects

Sharp and dirty objects are a potential hazard on planting sites. Syringes are a particularly dangerous threat due to their potential for infection.

Do wear gloves.

Do avert your face from potting mix dust when removing plants from their pots.

Do avoid handling anything sharp that you don't need to.

Do remember not to push stakes into the ground with hands, this can lead to splinters.

Don't breath in dust from the potting mix the plants are in. It can carry disease organisms.

Don't dig into the soil with bare hands.

Don't unnecessarily handle glass, rusty metal, etc. Call the supervisor to remove such objects safely if necessary.

Don't touch syringes under any circumstances. If you find one, warn those around you and call the ranger who has the training and equipment to deal with it. A used syringe can carry life-threatening diseases.

6. Animals

While there are some potentially dangerous creatures in the bush, any danger can be averted if care is taken to avoid them.

Do wear gloves, long pants, thick socks and strong footwear.

Do keep your eye out for snakes in warm weather.

Do warn others if you see a snake.

Do move quickly away if bitten by a bull ant. There could be more about.

Do tell someone immediately if you are bitten by anything.

Don't put your hands into places you can't see. Spiders and biting insects are common in the bush.

Don't step over logs without looking first. Poisonous snakes occur in the country. They are very timid and invariably try to move away to safety when they see a human. Make sure you don't stand between them and their escape route.

Don't try to pick up or kill snakes or other dangerous animals.

Be well-prepared, be alert, watch out for your fellow workers and have a great day.