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ABSTRACT

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It may seem a small matter. A child reads a poem, a group of children sing a song, they listen to a short speech that seems much too long. Then finally it's time. Eager hands scoop soil from a hole where they will plant a tree. Older hands hold the seedling as the youngsters pat the soil firmly into place. They give it water, then step back to admire it. It's their tree, and it will always be their tree. It may be the last Friday in April, or a day in May or December. Whatever the date, it's Arbor Day, and ideas as well as trees are planted on the holiday that looks ahead. This theme of planting for the future is apparent in the thousands of Arbor Day celebrations organized by communities and schools every year. And for many people, the act of tree planting evokes a special feeling. National Arbor Day is celebrated on the last Friday in April, but many states celebrate it at times more conducive to tree planting in their local climate. Nearly every Arbor Day celebration involves the planting of trees. In many communities, the celebration involves both a look to the future and a nod to the past. Some cities have a grove in honor of local men and women who have served in the armed forces. Most Arbor Day celebrations involve children, and this is very appropriate. Children who learn to appreciate and care for trees while they are young will probably be good stewards in later years. For teachers, Arbor Day provides a unique opportunity to emphasize environmental education and integrate it with other subjects.