



## Lead by example

Children learn from the example set by parents and caregivers. Inside and outside the home, use earth friendly practices. A few examples from other sections in this Action Plan include: **Inside** — Turn off the lights when the room is not in use. Keep the temperature at 68°F in the winter and 78° in the summer. Recycle and reuse everything from food, cans and glass to clothes and food. Live simply. **Outside** — Encourage walking, biking, or carpooling to school. Plant native plants to bring back biodiversity. Grow vegetables and fruits organically to show children where food comes. Watch movies and videos that explore environmental issues. [Our Climate Our Future](#) has many videos to educate children about these topics. Read *The Lorax* by Dr. Seuss, a very powerful story about the impact to the ecosystem of cutting trees all the trees to manufacture goods.

## Join the Recycle Bowl Competition

This nationwide recycling Keep America Beautiful competition is for elementary, middle and high-school students. Join [Recycle Bowl](#) or bring one to your parish or school!

## Encourage children to help with garden chores

Nothing teaches a child more about nature than planting, weeding, mulching, mowing, turning the

compost pile, and managing pests in the garden. Put in butterfly and pollinator gardens to

encourage young people to learn the life cycle of a butterfly and importance of pollinators. If possible, grow food organically, too. Tomatoes, peppers, zucchini, and strawberries are fairly easy to grow in Massachusetts. When children grow food, they learn the cycle of farming from seed to harvest. To learn more about home gardening, visit the [Massachusetts Horticultural Society](#) or Massachusetts [Master Gardener Association](#). The [Vegetable Planting Chart](#) created by Umass Extension shows what to grow each month. As Ecclesiastes 3:2 reminds us, there is a time to plant and a time to harvest. It is important to observe the planting schedule for all plants.



## Cultivate a school garden

The [USDA](#) has a school gardening resource page that contains everything a teacher needs to know to put in a school garden. From how to build a raised bed to what to plant and how, soil considerations and natural pest management, it's all there. In addition, there are lesson plans for K-

12 in all core subjects. Training workshops are provided in the summer for teachers.

## Become a Junior Master Gardener

If your child has an interest in gardening, many counties offer a Junior Master Gardener program with nature-related activities in outdoor classrooms such as school and community gardens and nature centers. For more information, contact your county Extension office.



## Visit botanical gardens, nature centers, the aquarium, and city parks

Massachusetts varied seasons and temperatures provide fertile opportunities to showcase the fauna and flora of the region. [Massachusetts Botanical Gardens](#) and [Rose Kennedy Green Park](#) provide urbanites an oasis across the Bay State. North of Boston and the Merrimack Valley are home to nature and science centers. Many of these places conduct many educational programs for children through senior citizens. Mass Audubon's Sanctuaries, Tower Hill Garden, Heritage Museums and Gardens and many others appeal to gardeners and nature lovers alike who want to unplug and connect with nature.

## Volunteer to maintain Massachusetts' many natural treasures

Did you know 67% of Massachusetts is covered by forests? Forests impact air quality, habitats for wildlife, and water quality. Become a friend of the park or garden to help maintain the many state and local parks and nature centers and trails. Conduct environmental monitoring through [MassDEP](#). Many environmental non-profits such as the Nature Conservancy, our Department of Conservation and Recreation, Mass Wildlife, Sierra Club, and all the river keepers rely on volunteers to help them advocate for Massachusetts' natural resources. In 2017, approx. 2,300 people participated in [CoastSweep](#), an annual cleanup event. Over 180 miles of coastline, river bank, lakeshore were cleaned in eastern MA. Volunteers removed more than 25,500 pounds of debris to reduce their carbon footprint. While this Action Plan has many individual actions people can take to reduce their environmental footprint, it is also critically important for people to let our elected officials know we care about "our common home." Consider participating in Catholic Day at the Capitol.

## Explore the great outdoors

Take young people to hike, bike, camp, canoe, swim, fish, hunt, horseback ride and more amidst Massachusetts splendid natural resources in the many Federal and State Parks scattered throughout the state. Paddle down the Charles River, bike along the Ashuwillticook Rail Trail, hike the Blue Hills Reservation (or the 4k footers of New England if you'd up for the challenge), and go boating at Spot Pond or Hopkinton State Park. The [Massachusetts State Parks](#) website makes it easy to find a location and activities for you and your family to enjoy.

## Celebrate St. Francis Day

Encourage students to bring in their pets for the blessing of the animals. Discuss the life of the St.

Francis and his focus on simplicity and respect and love for the earth's creatures.

