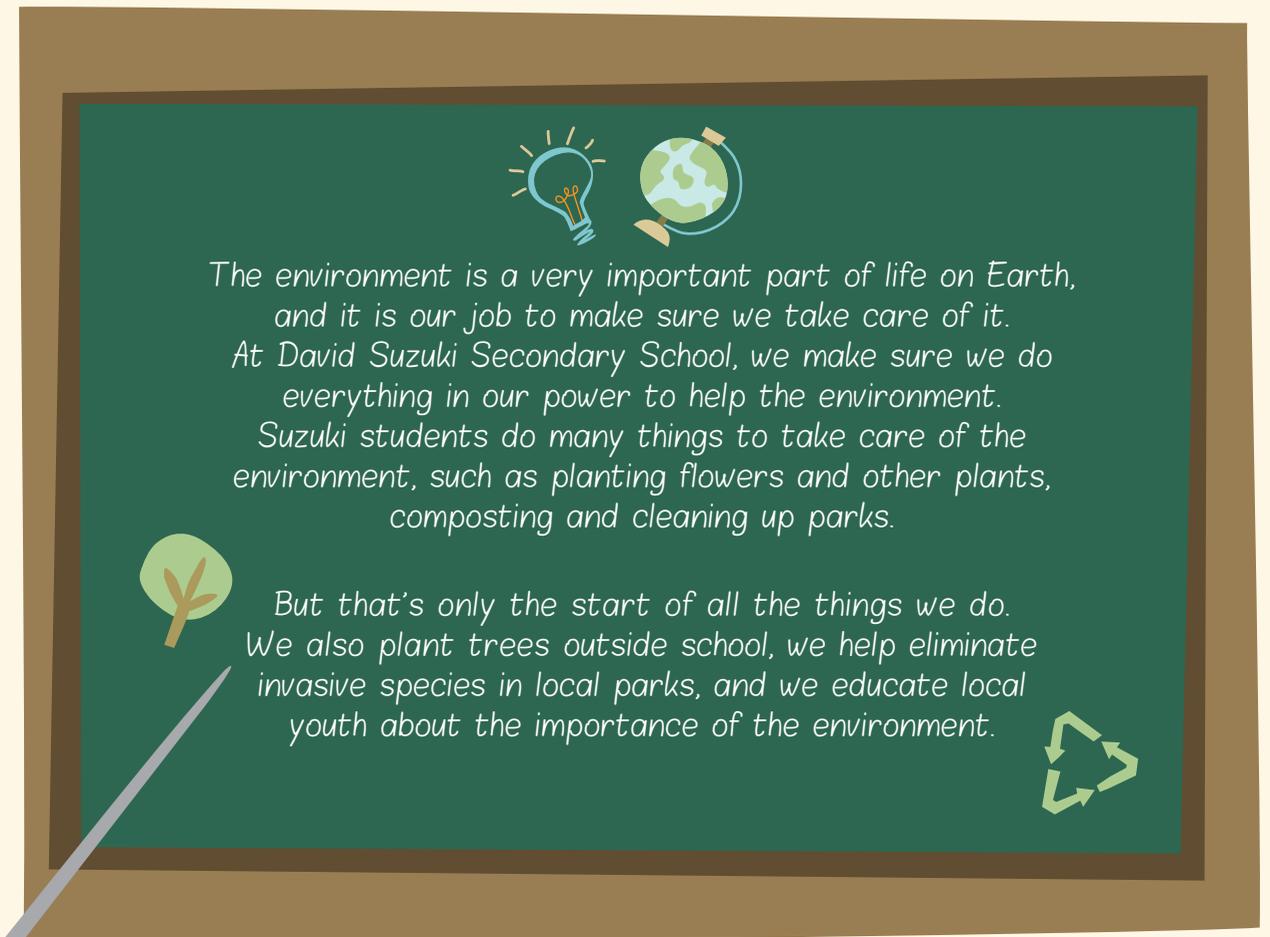


Can Your School Make a Difference?

You bet it can. Just ask the students at David Suzuki Secondary School in Brampton, Ont. Protecting nature and habitat is a daily job for them. Here, they share four tips for how you can make your school greener, too

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TIP #1
Get A Grip on Invasive Species

Invasive species? Have no fear, David Suzuki is here! Every year at David Suzuki Secondary School, we venture out to local parks to remove plants that threaten the health and happiness of the local space.

We focus on two plants: European buckthorn and garlic mustard.

European buckthorn hates to be alone — it spreads like crazy and leaves no room for the native plants that should be in the park. That's not all, though. It has a secret weapon — it's a poo plant. The European buckthorn creates a fruit that birds eat. But the fruit gives the birds diarrhea, which is how the European buckthorn spreads seeds.

The second plant is garlic mustard. It also hates to be by itself and has poisonous roots that kill other plants.

However, these two bad guys are no match for Suzuki students. After an afternoon of pulling them up, we help restore peace to the plants of the park.



TIP #2
Give Native Plants a Helping Hand

Plants are so cool. We love caring for them. We love the way they look and that they help the environment, too.

At David Suzuki Secondary School, we grow vegetables, herbs and even flowers. The flowers are pretty once they bloom, and we feel proud that we grew them from seed. It's fun to watch them go from a little seed to a big healthy plant. And because you cared for it, you make it all possible.

The flowers we plant are all native to Ontario, so they all belong as part of Ontario's ecosystem. They also attract animals like butterflies and birds, which rely on certain native plants. Native plants live longer too, because they're adapted to our climate.

TIP #3
Get Down and Dirty with Compost

At our school, we make our own compost. We do this by taking thousands of worms and putting them in a big bin full of dirt. Then we feed them things like banana peels and apple cores after we've eaten. The worms then "excrete" all of that food, which makes compost.

We can use compost to feed our plants and make them grow strong. Composting also allows us to reduce the amount of food that would otherwise just be thrown in the trash.

Using this compost, we can help any plant you can imagine grow, from corn to flowers, and even baby trees.

Now, you may find yourself thinking, "Why do I care?" Our answer for you would be, "because you get to play with thousands of worms and later grow awesome plants — and even your own food." All in all, it's a pretty amazing, messy and fun way to help our environment.

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TIP #4
Take It to the Streets

At the end of April, students at David Suzuki Secondary School participated in an exciting, awesome activity. We all spent a period of our day cleaning up the community around our school.

We all spent our time picking up and sorting through waste and recycling — and had lots of fun. Students were allowed to separate into groups and try their best to clean the community. Not only was it great for the environment, but it was also an enjoyable class bonding activity.

Members of the neighbourhood were pleased with what the school was doing for our environment. Getting outside, making a difference and also being complimented on our work felt great. We believe that taking care of the Earth we live on is very important. We need to ensure that it will be able to provide for future generations as well as it is providing for us.

Doing something for the environment provided us with a great sense of accomplishment, and we were all proud of ourselves afterwards. 🌱

