



Martin O'Malley, Governor

Dear Maryland Educator:

I am writing to invite you to participate in the *Marylanders Plant Trees 2013* School Challenge, a contest to encourage our students, parents, businesses and communities to plant and register native trees in the name of their school.

As you may know, we launched Marylanders Plant Trees in 2008 to encourage citizens to help create a smarter, greener future for our State. This year, we are challenging every Maryland school and every Maryland student to contribute to our annual statewide goal of planting 50,000 new trees — trees that will protect our water quality, clean our air, provide wildlife habitat, beautify our neighborhoods and help reduce energy costs long into the future. And we need your help to make it happen.

The first step is to visit the Marylanders Plant Trees website at www.trees.maryland.gov. Here students can create goals with their teachers, learn where and how to plant, calculate the environmental and economic benefits of their trees, and register and site the trees planted in their school's name. They can also download \$25 coupons, good toward the purchase of a native tree costing \$50 or more at 80 participating nurseries across the State.

The site also offers a wealth of resources for teachers, including lesson plans, reading suggestions, information on trees, a color version of the School Challenge flyer and a letter you can send home to parents to get them on board.

Students are encouraged to reach out to family, friends and neighbors to persuade them to plant trees, and to collaborate with community, watershed and service organizations for planting opportunities.

The Challenge, which is administered by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR), runs through April 30, 2013. Trees planted at any time between April 1, 2012 and April 30, 2013 may be counted toward your school's goal. The schools with the most trees planted will be named to the School Challenge Honor Roll, and the grand prize winner will enjoy a program from Scales & Tales, including live birds of prey and reptiles, which will be held on the winning school campus in the fall of 2013.

You and your students already know that planting a tree is a great way to have a positive impact on our planet — our air, our water and our health. We hope you will take this opportunity to come together with members of your community to plant and be counted. Working together as One Maryland, we are creating a smarter, greener, more sustainable future for our children and theirs.

Questions regarding teacher resources may be directed to Cindy Etgen at cetgen@dnr.state.md.us or 410-260-8716. For general information on the program or logistics, please contact Lindsay Major at lmajor@dnr.state.md.us or 410-260-8510.

In closing, I want to thank you for doing the most important job in our State, through which you are helping Maryland children grow to become informed, responsible adult stewards.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Martin O'Malley". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "M".

Martin O'Malley
Governor