



How-To Guide

Logs & Stumps

Logs and stumps are a cost effective, simple way of adding natural elements throughout the outdoor learning environment. Although they will need to be replaced every few years, they can serve as boundary edges to contain earth and sand play settings, and border pathways while also providing opportunities for balancing and sitting. As they decay, they might provide habitat for bugs and worms - which are fun for kids to explore!

Duration



1 - 2 hours per stump or log

of People



1 - 2 per stump or log

Required Effort



Fairly simple



Photo: Natural Learning Initiative (NLI)



Photo: ECHO



Photo: NLI



Photo: ECHO

Materials

- Stumps (6" to 18" long, 6" to 24" diameter)
- Heavy grit sandpaper (40-60)
- Non-toxic, water-based wood sealer
- Logs (24" to 96" long, 8" to 24" diameter)
- Access to power

Tools

- Chainsaw
- Paint brushes
- Pick mattocks
- Handsaw
- Paint trays
- Eye and ear protection
- Power sanders
- Drop cloths
- Gloves
- Extension cords
- Wheelbarrow
- (Optional) Hatchet
- Leaf blower or air compressor with a hose and air nozzle
- Shovels



Photo: NWF

Implementation Steps

- 1 Gather materials**
 - Contact local arborists or tree companies, look for tree work being done in your community, check with your municipality or local parks department, and keep an eye out for suitable material on the side of the road.
- 2 Prep**
 - Bark can be left intact!
 - Sand/bevel any accessible sharp edges, protruding branch nubs, and particularly splintery areas.
 - Using the leaf blower or an air compressor, blow off any dust from sanding.
- 3 (Optional) Seal/Weatherproof**
 - Apply non-toxic, water-based wood sealer per product instructions.
- 4 Place in desired locations**
- 5 (Optional) Secure logs and stumps in location**
 - If stumps or logs are to be fixed in place, make sure that they are secure and don't move, shift, or wobble when stepped on.
 - Bury the log or stump at least 1/3 of its total height or diameter, and tamp the earth around it.

Considerations

- **Always call 811 before you dig to locate buried utilities.**
- Talk to tree removal companies and ask them to reserve tree segments before they grind or chip them. Usually logs can be found throughout the community for free.
- Logs and stumps will need replacing every five years or so. Hardwoods such as elm, maple, oak, and ash are recommended as they are longer lasting than softwoods. Pine, spruce, and other soft woods are not ideal as they decompose very fast.
- Per licensing requirements, the maximum finished above-grade height for stumps and logs is 18" without requiring a fall zone.
- Leaving the bark intact provides a more tactile, enriching experience for children than if it were removed. The bark will deteriorate or fall off over time, offering valuable lessons in decay and maybe even habitat with the introduction of bugs and worms!



Photo: NWF

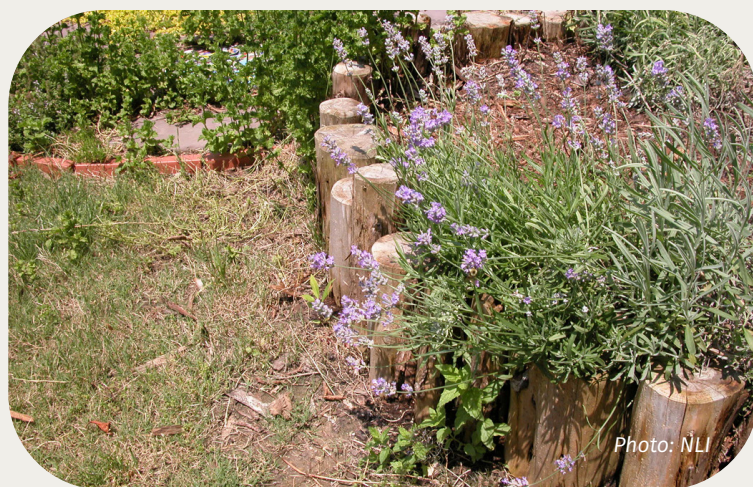


Photo: NLI



Cover photo
credit: ECHO

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