

# A Visit with Old Man Spruce! Puppet Show

## Essential Question(s):

Who are the Air Cleaning  
Department workers?

Why are trees important?

## Background Information: see

Background Information for  
Garden Earth – Air Cleaning  
Department



**At a Glance:** Learners will learn why trees are important and what threatens the Air Cleaning Department by watching a puppet show. Characters that are part of the Air Cleaning Department will give learners insight into how air is cleaned and the troubles they face.

## Getting Ready:

Decide who will perform the puppet show. Will it be the learners, the teachers, or a classroom volunteer? Two puppeteers will be needed for this puppet show. One puppeteer will play Foreco, Old Man Spruce and Tree Two while the other will play Malcolm and Tree One.

Print templates for the puppets on card stock, color and laminate them. Set up a simple stage for performing the show. Assemble props as needed.

## Procedure:

1. Ask learners what trees provide for us. As they respond, record their answers on the board. Have learners work in groups to categorize their answers. Have learners share their answers. You may need to prompt them to include these eight things that are mentioned in the puppet show (shade, food, clean air, houses, medicines, paper, oxygen, habitat). Tell them that Old Man Spruce would like to visit to tell them what it is like being a tree.
2. Assemble the learners in front of the puppet theater.
3. Perform the puppet show. Two puppeteers will be needed for this puppet show.

## Discussion/Assessment:

How do trees help humans?

What work did the trees do?

What did Old Man Spruce mean when he yelled, ‘Respect the trees!’?

What were some of the problems that Old Man Spruce and his workers faced?

How could we help Old Man Spruce and his workers clean the air?

**Location:** Puppet theatre

**Objectives:** Learners will

- 1) display curiosity about the role of trees in cleaning the air.
- 2) describe several reasons trees are important to humans.
- 3) develop empathy and concern for other living organisms.

**Skills:** communication, listening, empathy, analysis

## Supplies:

- **Script:** *A Visit with Old Man Spruce*
- **Puppets**
  - Foreco
  - Old Man Spruce
  - Malcolm Chipmunk
  - Tree One
  - Tree Two
- **Props**
  - Medicine bottle
  - Piece of wood
  - Paper
  - Stick with berries on it

**Subjects:** language arts, science

**Time:** 15 minutes

# A Visit with Old Man Spruce Tree

## SCRIPT

**Foreco:** (*propped on stage*) Hello again, boys and girls. Your next adventure will take you to visit the Air Cleaning Department. Old Man Spruce will be your guide. Oh dear, I'm afraid he is asleep again. (*calling*) Malcolm... Malcolm... Where are you?

**Malcolm:** (*whining*) What is it Foreco? I was trying to eat.

**Foreco:** I need you to wake up Old Man Spruce so he can tell the children about his work.

**Malcolm:** Ohhh...I hate trying to keep him awake.

**Foreco:** Nevertheless, it **is** your job. And do stop whining Malcolm, it is very annoying. (*to the audience*) I will see you children later. I'm sure Old Man Spruce will tell you all about his department. Don't forget to wake him up, Malcolm. (*exits*)

**Malcolm:** Yeah, yeah. I hate trying to keep this old geezer awake. (*Old Man Spruce snores*) I guess I better get started.

**Old Man Spruce:** (*snores and shakes on the stage and snores some more*)

**Malcolm:** Wake up Old Man Spruce! Wake up!

**Old Man Spruce:** (*keeps on snoring*)

**Malcolm:** WAKE UP! WAKE UP!

**Old Man Spruce:** (*waking up suddenly*) Vot do you vant? I am awake. And who are you calling an old geezer?

**Malcolm:** (*embarrassed*): You heard that? I thought you were sleeping.

**Old Man Spruce:** Aha! An evergreen tree is never fully asleep. Zat is vie my leaves stay green all year long and clean ze air.

**Malcolm:** That's why I was waking you up Old Man Spruce. Foreco told all the boys and girls that you would tell them about your work.

**Old Man Spruce:** *(Clears his throat)* Vot? Children? Vere are zey? Let me take a look...*(he bends to look at children below)*. Oh! Hello boys and girls, welcome to Foreco's Garden. Nice day, isn't it? *(and he starts to snore again)*

**Malcolm:** *(pushing at lower branches, shaking him again)* Please, Old Man Spruce, you need to tell the children about your important job. It's very important that they know about the work you do!

**Old Man Spruce:** Oh, yes; *(regaining his dignity)* my verk, my Department...Yes, I am in charge of making clean air for all ze animals and plants, even for you boys and girls. You do like clean air don't you? *(children reply)*

**Malcolm:** I like clean air.

**Old Man Spruce:** *(to Malcolm)* SILENCE! *(to children)* My trees breathe in ze air *(make sound)*, and breathe out ze air *(make sound)*, and clean ze air. We lift our branches high into ze sky and filter out dust and carbon dioxide gas! Children, make like you are trees and breathe in ze air and breathe out ze air and clean ze air of dust and gas. Now breathe in vith me children. *(wait for reply)* Very good... and breathe out ze air, very good indeed! Foreco says we are the lungs of the forest!! I will let my trees tell you more. Now, vere are my trees? *(calling)* Tree Vun... Tree Two!

**Malcolm:** Oh no...Not One and Two. They're nothing but trouble. *(exits)*

**Old Man Spruce:** Yes, Vun and Two are fine verkers. *(calling again)* Vun... Two...

**One:** Three

**Two:** Four

**Worker trees:** *(Workers happy and dancing around Old Man Spruce); singing to the tune from "Oliver")*

Air, glorious air!

We clean and purify it!

Clean, fresh and delicious,

Where would you be without it!

Air, glorious air!

**Tree One:** Hi, boys and girls, My name is One...

**Tree Two:** ...and I am Two.

**One:** We trees are very important workers.

**Two:** Not only do we clean the air...

**One:** *(holds up wood and tosses a bit of paper).* ...we make wood for paper and houses

**Two:** We provide delightful shade...

**One:** *(holding up berries)* We make delicious nuts and berries for you to eat...

**Two:** ...and don't forget the oxygen for you to breathe...

**One:** *(holding up medicine bottle)* ...and the medicines are so important!

**One and Two** *(singing to same tune as previous verse):*

Trees, glorious trees...

We are so important!

Trees, beautiful and strong,

Where would you be without us?!

**Old Man Spruce:** Children, vize people say zat a tree is like eight children because a tree provides eight very important things. Repeat these after me:

Shade *(wait for reply after each one)*

Food

Clean Air

Houses

Medicines

Paper

Oxygen

**One:** Old Man Spruce, what about habitat?

**Old Man Spruce:** Vie of course! Boys and girls, do you know what habitat is? *(pause)*

**Two:** Habitat is where animals live. Many animals live in trees, like birds and squirrels and insects.

**Old Man Spruce:** Zat is right. Make sure you give trees the respect zat zay deserve! Now children, say, "respect the trees!" *(wait for reply)* Yes, respect the trees! *(in loud, celebrating voice)*

**Malcolm:** *(from off stage)* Old Man Spruce, don't forget to tell them about your roots.

**Old Man Spruce:** *(looking down behind stage)* Vie, of course I vill, Malcolm... *(to the children)* He is a very helpful little rodent, isn't he boys and girls? *(again calling to Malcolm somewhat indignantly).* But I do think I can speak for myself. *(back to children)* Now about the soil...Boys and girls, if it were not for the trees sending our good strong roots into the soil, the soil would vash away and mess up the rivers, and the soil would fly into the air and dirty it up! One and Two, tell zem more.  
*(One and Two get more excited with each line of their script)*

**One:** We start off as a small little seed that falls to the ground...

**Two:** ...we send down roots...

**One:** ...we send branches into the air...

**Two:** ...we make green leaves...

**One:** ...flowers, nuts, berries...

**Two:** ...birds nest in our hair...

**One:** ...squirrels on our limbs...

**Two:** ...we sway in the breezes...

**One:** ...we kiss the sky *(makes kissing noise)*...

**Two:** ,,we love our life! *(they exit the stage as Old Man Spruce begins to speak)*

**Old Man Spruce:** Very good One and Two! Now boys and girls, you do understand vie the Air Department is important - don't you? Vood you children like to be trees? *(wait for reply)* These days there are not as many trees as there once were because they were cut down to make room for highways and houses and shopping malls. Ve trees zat are left have to work very hard to clean all of the dirty air. Those cars and power plants make the dirtiest air and ve have a hard time cleaning it all. Perhaps zat is vie I am so sleepy! Vell, I must be going now it's been a long season with lots of dirty air to clean and I've been dreaming about dreaming - good bye . . . *(he snores off to sleep)*