

## RECLAMATION PROJECT TOOL KIT



Dear friend,

As you think about launching the *Reclamation Project* in your community, the first thing you need to do is ask yourself, "Why am I doing this?"

You may want to help others understand that there is a profound interconnectedness between their lives and the ecosystems that surround them. You may want to garner support to fight a new shrimp farm or marina development. You may want to protect your town from storm surge or help suck up carbon emissions. Regardless, you need to understand your "why" before starting this project.

The truth is, you know what your community needs more than I do. You know who your community partners are. All I can do is provide a way for you to bring those two things together, but the good news about art is that it will allow you to get the support of those who care so that together you can get the attention and support of those who don't.

Please document everything you do and remember to tag me on social media (@xcortada) so I can stay up to date with all of your great work.

For people and the planet,  
Xavier Cortada

# Reclamation Project

EcoArt by Xavier Cortada



Below you will find the steps to implementing the *Reclamation Project* where you live. Consider these to be guidelines (not strict instructions) and feel free to be creative in how you bring this project to life. [Click here](#) for more on how and why we've done it.

## **STEP 1: FIND YOUR PEOPLE**

Who will you join forces with to launch this project?

You need to find a group of people, a core of volunteers, that you are going to partner with to make this happen. These are the people who will help you collect and plant mangroves, create installations, and work with you on all of the logistics.

It's also important to look for institutional support, when possible, to grow the reach of the project. Over the years, we've been able to engage tens of thousands of people by working with local museums, libraries, and schools.

Here are some questions to help you think about who may want to join you in this effort:

- Do you have any friends, family or neighbors who are similarly concerned/share your interest?
- Are you involved with an advocacy or environmental group?
- Do you know of any local institutions (civic, community, educational, faith, nonprofit organizations) that may share your concern/interest?

*~ Helpful Hint ~*

*As you start to find your people, make sure they have a sense of ownership over the project by providing clear responsibilities, objectives, and goals.*

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## STEP 2: MANGROVE COLLECTIONS

How and where will you collect your mangroves?

You need to figure out where you can legally collect red mangrove propagules, how you can do it safely, and importantly where you can store the mangroves that you collect:

- Legality
  - There are different laws pertaining to mangrove collection based on where you are, so research the local policies to ensure you're not doing anything illegal.
  - You may need to acquire a permit before you begin collecting, so be sure to factor in that process before you plan your first collection date.
- Safety
  - Everyone involved should come prepared with sun protection, non-toxic insect repellent, closed-toed shoes, and plenty of water.
  - Ensure you and participants are aware of any and all safety concerns.
  - Protect yourself from exposure to liability (e.g., release forms).
  - Safety of the mangroves is important too! Make sure you're careful to avoid stepping on baby mangroves, harming wildlife, and leaving trash.
- Storage
  - You will be placing all of the mangrove propagules you collect in small buckets, so you need to find an outdoor location where you can leave your mangrove buckets until it's time to create the installations.
  - Keep your buckets half-filled with fresh water and in full to partial sun.

~ Helpful Hint ~

*The red mangrove generally flowers in the summer months, so plan your propagule collections in the late summer and early fall.*

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## STEP 3: ECO-ART INSTALLATIONS

How and where will you create your eco-art installations?

You need to find suitable locations for your installations. The best spots will be:

- Places with good foot traffic (highly visible)
- Places where it would be weird and unexpected (attention-grabbing)
- Places where the installation will be maintained (watered & cared for)
- Places with at least some sunlight

Ideal locations for your installations may include windows or walls in small businesses, libraries, schools, universities, museums, and parks. Clearly you must get approval from any entity that owns the space where you would like to create an installation, but most are eager hosts once they learn the purpose behind the project.

Once you have your approval, it's time to create the installation. The materials you will need are the following:

- [16 oz compostable cups](#) (or recycled cans)
- [Suction cups with hooks](#) (or nails if installing on a wall)
- [Binder clips](#)
- Mangrove propagules
- Water
- Project flyers (or signage of some sort)
- A sheet of printer paper (used for measuring)

To create your vertical nursery, you'll want to start by finding the middle of the installation space for your first suction cup or nail. From there, use your sheet of paper to measure out 8.5" to the left and right, as well as 11" up and down, and place your next suction cups in those locations. Build out your grid as large as you can and then begin preparing your cups (the same number as points on your grid) by filling them up

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halfway with water and attaching a binder clip to each. You can then hang every cup on a suction cup hook and add one mangrove to each. Complete the installation by hanging project flyers alongside the cups so that passersby can learn about the project's purpose. The flyers should include a brief description of the *Reclamation Project*, a URL ([www.cortada.com/reclamation](http://www.cortada.com/reclamation)), and #reclamationproject.

[CLICK HERE FOR AN INSTRUCTIONAL VIDEO](#)

Lastly, ensure your volunteers thoroughly explain the project to the installations' hosts as they will be the ones who answer questions about it on a daily basis.



~ Helpful Hint ~

*Your installations have sitting water and may attract breeding mosquitoes. If they do, you can use olive oil, vegetable oil, or mosquito pellets to kill the larvae.*



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## STEP 4: MANGROVE PLANTING

How and where will you plant your mangroves?

You need to figure out where you can legally plant red mangroves, how you can do it safely, and importantly how you can ensure a maximum survival rate:

- Refer to “Legality” and “Safety” in Step 2
  - In urbanized places, it may be difficult to find a shoreline that has yet to be developed with condos or barricaded by sea walls. If you’re not sure where to plant, contact your local government to inquire about any existing restoration sites (or the possibility of creating one!) in your area.
- Survival
  - For the best chance at survival, you will want to plant the mangroves along the water’s edge where there is consistent tidal flow, but minimal wave action.
  - As mangroves are salt-tolerant, they can survive in both freshwater and saltwater environments.
  - Propagules should ideally be positioned between full and partial sun.

As you get ready to plant, do your best to have as many people join in the experience as possible, even if that means everyone only plants 1-2 mangroves. It will be an impactful and memorable moment that helps transform participants into stewards of the environment for the rest of their lives. End the planting with a group reflection.

~ Helpful Hint ~

The **Mangrove Action Project** is non-profit based in Seattle, Washington that works with a variety of local and international entities to help preserve, restore, and educate on our global mangrove forests. I am really fond of their work. If you have any technical questions about mangroves and their planting, please [contact them](#).