Ideas & Activities to grow your own Tree Week

This pack is filled with tips and facts about the wonderful world of trees to help you celebrate Tree Week with your family, friends and community.

An Apple A Day Challenge

There are over 6000 varieties of apple but the only apple tree native to Britain is the Crab Apple! All apples are a great source of energy and not just for humans, but birds too! So during Tree Week why not celebrate the apple tree by eating, planting and using one apple every day!

You will need:

- 14 apples per person (1 to eat and sow and 1 to make something with)
- A small bag of potting soil
- Pots to sow your apples in (make sure they have holes at the bottom). You could also use the bottom half of a plastic bottle (just ask an adult to help you cut the bottle and make the holes)
- Imagination

To get your imagination going here’s one way you can use an apple:

Make an apple bird feeder!

You will need:

- Pencil
- Small stick or old pencil
- String
- Sunflower seeds (with their black husks on)

1. Ask an adult to push your pencil through the top of the apple until it pokes out at the bottom. This can be hard work so leave them to it!
2. Take the string and poke it through the apple.
3. Tie the string to the middle of your stick.
4. Push the sunflower seeds into the apple to complete your edible decoration! With the help of an adult hang your apple up on a tree’s branch or somewhere high outside.
5. Keep an eye out for any birds or squirrels eating from it.
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Indoor Tree-Trail

We use trees in every aspect of our daily life, from the air we breathe, to the food we eat, to the chairs we sit on! You can discover just how reliant we are on trees from just looking around your home.

How many items can you count in your household that come from trees?
How many items are made from paper, cardboard or wood?
How many foods and condiments can you find in your kitchen that originated from trees?

Recycled Tree House

Trees have been essential to building our homes for centuries. In fact up to 68% of trees felled are used in the construction industry. But building new homes doesn’t always have to mean cutting down trees.

How many ways can you think to build a house without cutting down trees for wood?

1. Throughout Tree Week collect all the cardboard and paper in your school or household that would otherwise be thrown out (and recycled). These will be your construction materials!
2. Draw a plan of your dream tree house.
3. Build a model of your tree house using all the materials you collected.
4. If you like, take a photo and ask an adult to share it on Instagram #treeweektreehouse

Tree Skiffle

Trees have always played an important role in allowing humans to create music. To this day many instruments, like guitars and drums, are made from wood. But if you don’t have access to these instruments that doesn’t mean you can’t create music. After World War Two many materials were rationed so ‘skiffle bands’ rose in popularity. These were groups of musicians who made their own instruments from any object they could make a noise with, from wooden crates to wash-boards!

Celebrate Tree Week with some home-made music! Grab some sticks and find something wooden to drum on. Leaves can be used to make a rustling noise like symbols or tie some string to opposite ends of a piece of bark and create your own guitar!

You will need:

- Sticks
- Leaves
- string
- Tree bark
- Imagination

DID YOU KNOW?

In 1846 a conscientious objector set out to make his own violin in Ireland. They are thought to be the oldest windwood instrument ever discovered. After the two years to have grown their own trees, leaving them over 500 years ago!
Grow Your Own Woodland

Not so long ago London was covered in forest, from the Great North Wood in the south up to Epping Forest in the east and HighGate Woods in the west. As London grew the skyline began to fill up with rooftops, factory-chimneys, cranes, office blocks and helipads. Nowadays trees make up less than 22% of London’s canopy (the space you see above street-level), yet this could be 29% if we let trees grow. All we have to do is visit our local woodlands, show our support for our local environmental charities and grow trees wherever we can. Trees help shape eco-systems, this means as tree numbers increase, so too do the number of habitats and foods available for insects and small creatures, which in-turn helps to support the wildlife population more generally.

You can see this all in action by making a model of a woodland habitat in a shoebox! Watch what happens when you add water to earth and seeds, see how it changes in different temperatures and in different locations. How does your woodland grow?

You will need:

- Leaves
- Water
- Soil
- Clay
- Shoe-box
- Sticks
- Stones
- Nuts
- Seeds
- Moss (or grass if you can’t find any)

1. To make the floor of your woodland begin by building up layers of soil and clay.
2. Scatter seeds and/ore nuts over the top of your woodland floor.
3. Layer some areas with moss or grass.
4. Use the sticks you have collected as trees.
5. Create a pond using some clay and lay stones around its edge
6. You could keep your box in one location, such as a window sill, and see how it changes at different temperatures and times of the day. Or take it outside and discover what insects use your woodland in different locations.

Make a Family Tree

Trees can help us to understand where we are from and how we are related to each other. A ‘family tree’ allows you to map-out all your relatives and shows how they connect together. If you are the youngest in your family, you are the leaves on a very tall tree, with any brothers and sisters growing from the branches of your parents. Alongside your leaves there might also be the leaves of cousins, who are branching off from your aunts and uncles; all of whom grew-up from your grandparents, and their parents (your great grandparents!) these people make-up the trunk and roots of the tree. Each tree is different because each family is different.

You will need:

- Pencils
- Sticky notes
- Blue tack
- A large piece of paper

1. Draw a large outline of a tree, with roots, a trunk, branches and leaves.
2. On a sticky note write your name, your date of birth, and where you were born.
3. Stick your note at the end of a branch.
4. Write a new note for every family member, with their name, dates of birth and where they were born.
5. Organise the post-its on your tree.
“Have You Seen This Tree?”

Most neighbourhoods will have a range of trees. Some might be ancient, others might be native to Britain, and there might also be rare specimens. Help people explore their neighbourhood by drawing their attention to these trees with a poster campaign!

Get outside and get researching! Look online and use your library to find out how to identify different tree species. Be sure to speak to your neighbours or friends as they may know a good fact about a local tree.

Use what you have learned to create Wanted posters for your favourite local trees and ask local businesses and schools to put your posters up for you.

“Hapazome”: Leaf Dying

Humans have been using leaves to decorate fabric for thousands of years. You can continue this tradition, by taking inspiration from the Japanese technique ‘Hapazome’, in which leaf and flower pigment is pounded into the fabric by hand.

You will need:

- A collection of fresh leaves
- Light fabric preferably muslin cloth or Calico
- A mallet/rolling pin
- Paper towel

1. Collect a range of fresh leaves. Avoid dry leaves as these won’t have much colour to transfer.
2. Layout your fabric on a hard flat surface.
3. Place your leaves in a pattern of your choice.
4. Cover the leaves with the paper towel.
5. Start hammering! Begin with small taps around the edge of the leaf and build up to bigger heavier hits until you feel the whole leaf has been pressed.
6. Remove the paper towel to reveal a colourful imprint.

Bushwhack

Trees are critical to sustaining wildlife. One tree alone can be sustaining hundreds of different species of fungi, lichen, insects, birds and mammals! You can discover a hidden world by simply giving a tree a good old shake!

You will need:

- A white sheet
- Magnifying glass
- Access to the branches of a large shrub or tree

1. Prepare your sheet by either laying it on the ground or by holding it directly underneath the branches.
2. Shake a leafy branch for up to 20 seconds.
3. Take a careful look at what has fallen onto your sheet.
4. Gently shake your sheet back over the branch to return the wildlife back to its natural habitat.
5. Be sure to try out different locations and tree species to see how the populations change.

www.sowingstories.org
Produce Your Own Ink

Did you know that for hundreds of years we relied on oak trees to make ink to write with? A tiny insect called an *oak marble gall wasp* rearranges the leaf cells of oak trees, to create a woody marble shaped nest for larvae to feed off. These ‘marble galls’ are filled with *tannin* which is one of the key ingredients to create *indelible ink*! Once the wasps have grown and eaten their way out of the marble gall it can then be collected by humans and turned into the very same ink which writers like William Shakespeare and Emily Bronte wrote with.

You will need

- A responsible adult!
- 1 tbl spoon of Gum Arabic (this is sold in art shops)
- 1 teaspoon of Iron sulphate (this can be ordered online, but a cheap alternative can be produced by leaving rusty items to stew in a secure container of water for at least 48 hrs)
- Pestle and mortar
- A generous handful of marble galls
- A bottle or vessel to mix it in
- A sieve
- A kettle

This is a messy process, so be sure to protect anything around you (including your hands) that you don’t want getting covered in ink!

1. Marble galls can be ordered online, but it’s much more fun to go hunting for them. Look for them on the branches and at the bottom of oak trees. Make sure they have a hole in them, otherwise you may end up taking home some harmless baby gall wasps with you!
2. Use the pestle and mortar to crush your marble galls into a coarse powder.
3. Pour a cup full of hot water over the powder.
4. Add the iron sulphate and the gum arabic.
5. Stir it all together.
6. Pour through a sieve.
7. Get a brush and start drawing/writing/painting with your ink! It will initially be light brown but over time it will become darker and darker.