DREAMING TREES 2024: THE ELEMENTS

Activities for young people and adults / 14+ years

Government of JERSEY · CREATIVE ISLAND PARTNERSHIP · RATHBONES

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INTRODUCTION

Dreaming Trees aims to encourage people of all ages outside to enjoy and rediscover the beauty of our parks and to think about the wonder of trees.

This pack includes some information that supports Dreaming Trees along with a selection of our favourite activities for young people and adults.

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THE WOOD WIDE WEB

One of the aims of Dreaming Trees is to share research that shows us how trees are connected underground by a wood wide web.

The web is made up of a mass of tiny threads of fungi called mycelium that grow around and inside the tree roots. Together, the mycelium becomes what is known as a mycorrhizal network which connects individual plants together to transfer water, nitrogen, carbon and other minerals.

This symbiotic relationship provides the tree with nutrients, and provides the mycelium with sugars absorbed from the tree roots. The term for this relationship is mycorrhiza which comes from the Greek words for fungus and root.

This fungal network also allows trees to share resources with each other. For example the oldest and biggest trees known as Mother Trees supply shaded seedlings with sugars, dying trees can pass their resources to their neighbours and trees can share messages with one another by sending chemical signals.
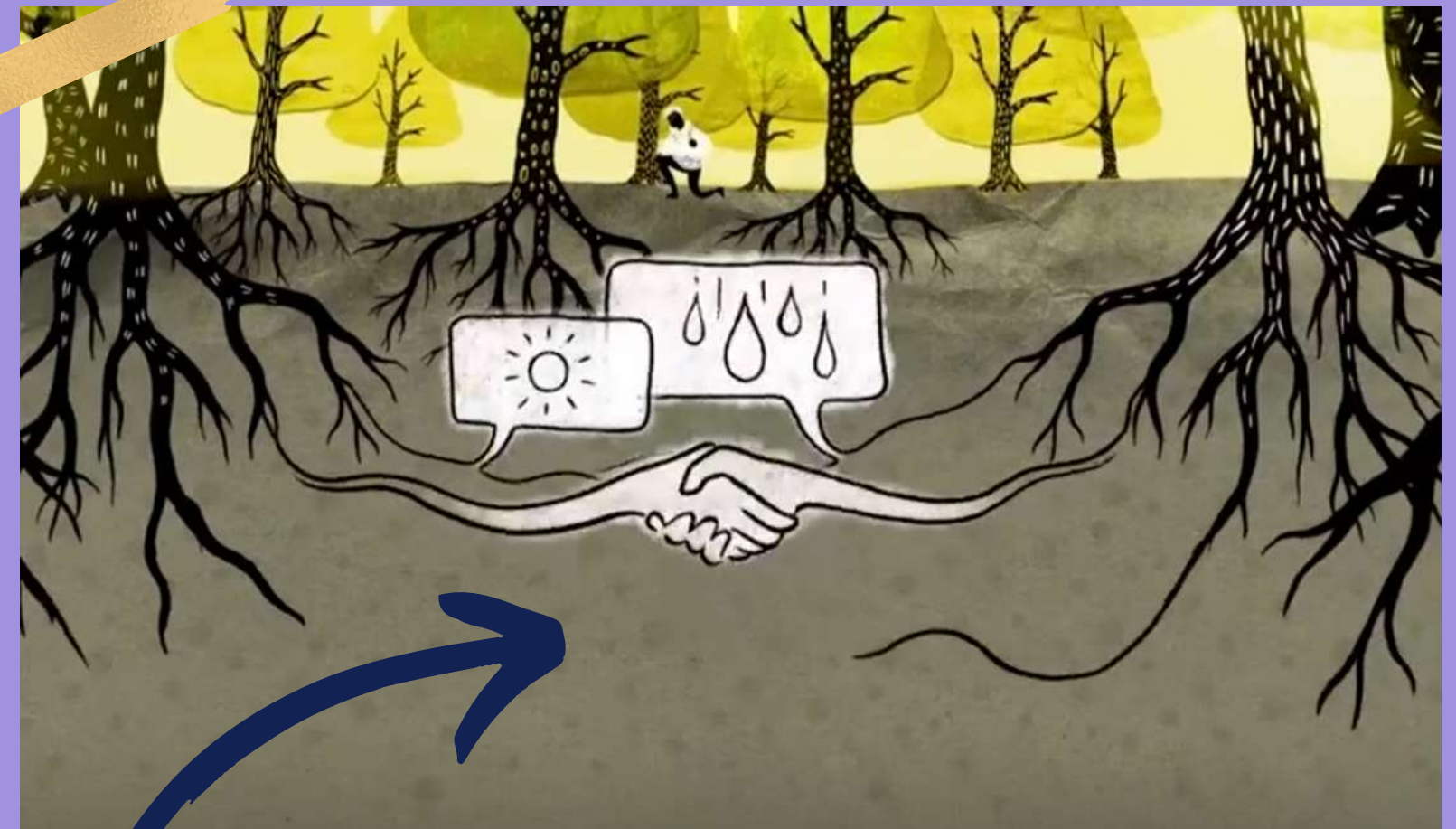
Watch this two minute video from the BBC 'How trees secretly talk to each other': https://youtu.be/yWOqeyPIVRo
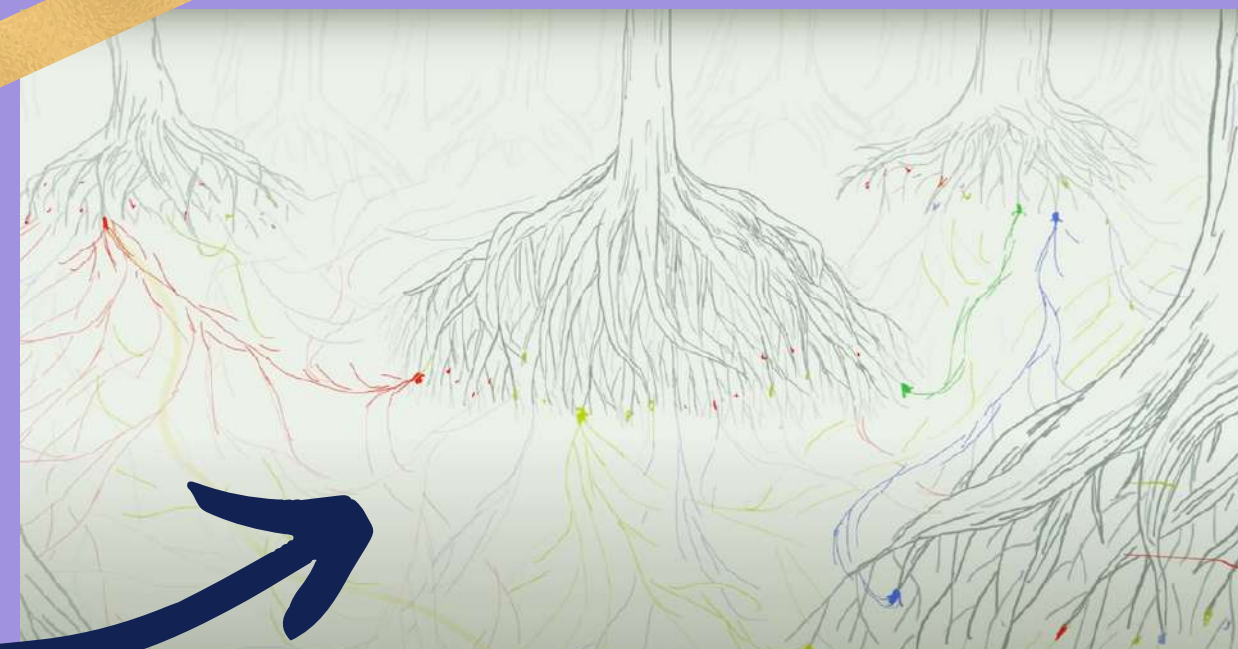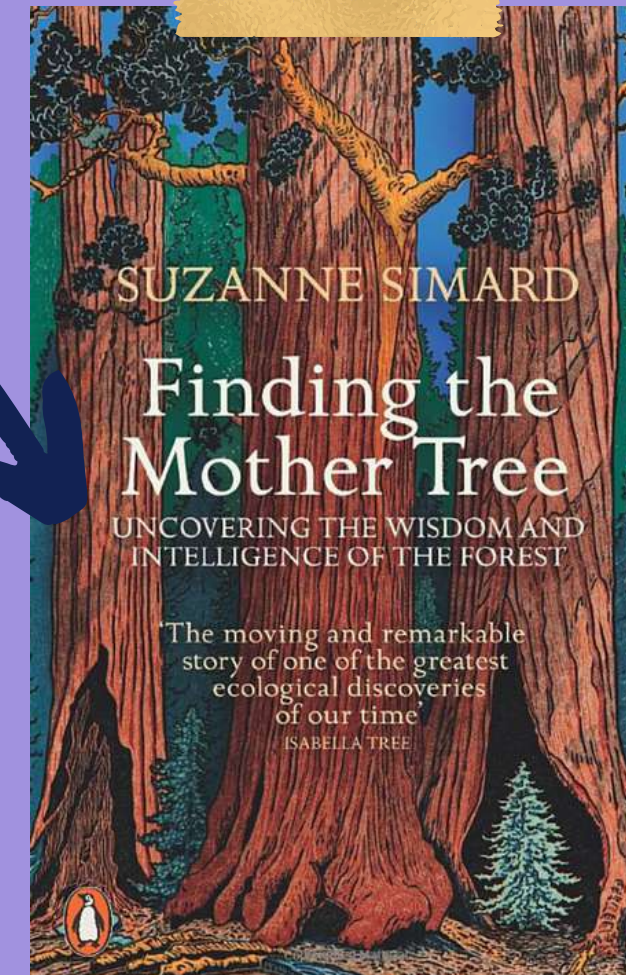
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DR SUZANNE SIMARD'S RESEARCH

Dr Suzanne Simard is a Professor of Forest Ecology at the University of British Columbia and the author of the book, Finding the Mother Tree - the source of inspiration behind Dreaming Trees.

Dr Simard is a pioneer on the frontier of plant communication and intelligence and is best known for her work on how trees interact and communicate using below-ground fungal networks, which has led to the recognition that forests have hub trees, or Mother Trees.

Sources of more information:

www.mothertreeproject.org - Started in 2015, the Mother Tree Project is a large, scientific, field-based experiment that builds on prior research with the central objective of identifying sustainable harvesting and regeneration treatments that will maintain forest resilience as the climate changes.

The secret language of trees (4.33 minute video) explaining how trees are able to communicate with each other by Camille Defrenne and Dr Suzanne Simard.

SUZANNE SIMARD

Finding the Mother Tree

UNCOVERING THE WISDOM AND INTELLIGENCE OF THE FOREST

'The moving and remarkable story of one of the greatest ecological discoveries of our time'
ISABELLA TREE

TREE-MENDOUS TREES!

Trees are great for people! Here are just a few of the many reasons why trees are tree-mendous:

1. Trees provide oxygen for us to breathe and they clean our air
2. Trees help to build healthy soil by providing fallen leaves and twigs which decompose
3. Trees provide shade and help to cool the air
4. Trees provide shelter, shade and food for people and wildlife
5. Trees can help to reduce the risk of flooding as their roots take up water from the soil
6. Spending time outside is good for our health and wellbeing

IDENTIFICATION

During winter it can be more difficult to identify different species but Trees for Schools provide some useful resources to view and download.

Here are some of our favourites:

Leaves
https://www.treetoolsforschools.org.uk/activities/pdfs/pdf_leaf_spotter_sheet.pdf

Twigs
https://www.treetoolsforschools.org.uk/activities/pdfs/pdf_twig_spotter_sheet.pdf

Blossom
https://www.treetoolsforschools.org.uk/activities/pdfs/pdf_blossoms_and_flowers_spotter_sheet.pdf

AIR POLLUTION

Trees help to clean the air we breathe by trapping dust and absorbing pollutants.

Do you know what air pollution is around you?

Make your own pollution catcher or make a number of catchers to explore the different levels of pollution around you, for example by your front and back door or by your front door and outside your bedroom window.

You will need: a piece of card (use the side of an empty cereal box), scissors, Vaseline, a piece of white paper, string and some sticky tape.

- Step 1: Cut out a square or rectangular piece of cardboard, roughly the size of your open hand and cut out a matching piece of paper.
- Step 2: Make a hole in the centre top of your piece of cardboard. Cut a piece of string, pass it through the hole and tie the two ends together.
- Step 3: Secure the paper to the card using the sticky tape at the corners.
- Step 4: Using your fingers or a butter knife, spread some Vaseline on the stuck down paper. Now hang it up outside.

After a week, you should be able to see pollution particles stuck to the Vaseline. If you live an area with very clean air, you might have to be a bit patient.

Thank you to Woodcraft Folk for this activity which is available at: https://dreambigathome.uk/activity/pollution-catcher/

WELLBEING / MINDFULNESS

You don't need a forest for forest bathing, a park is perfect.

This is an activity with no activities. It's simply spending time in and with nature and making time to experience the moment with your senses.

Go outside and find a starting point. Turn off your phone and take a walk. Breathe in the smells around you, listen to the sounds and think about how the ground feels beneath your feet. Take time to look at a leaf, tree bark or anything in the natural environment around you.

Find somewhere to sit. Try closing your eyes and take 10 slow, deep breaths in and out, then gently open your eyes and bring your awareness back. This is a great way to relax and clear your mind.

Stay as long as you feel comfortable. Even just 10 minutes can help you to feel refreshed.
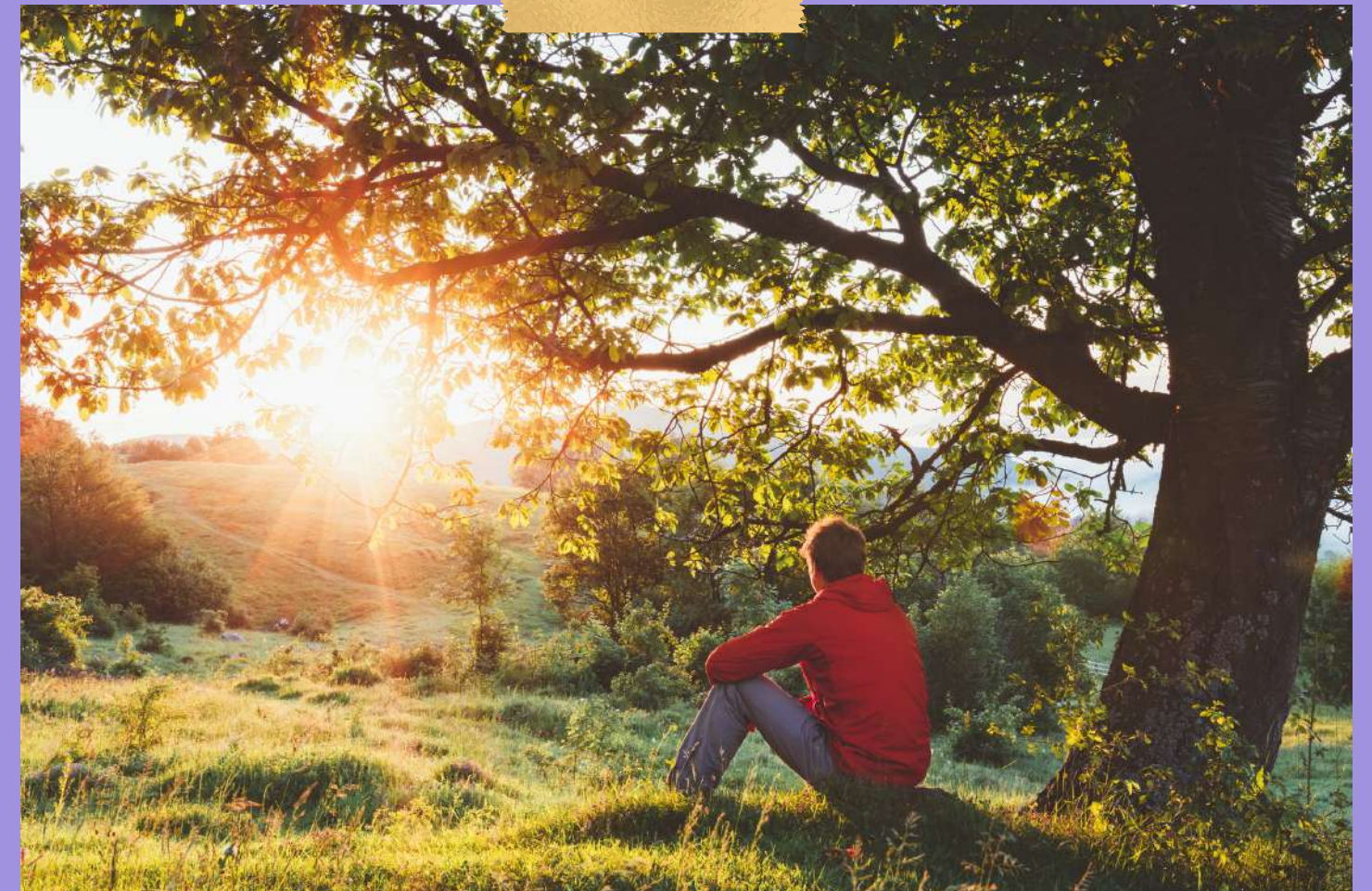
Research commissioned by the National Trust found respondents were 30% more relaxed, 25% less stressed and 20% less anxious after listening to a one-minute recording of forest sounds.
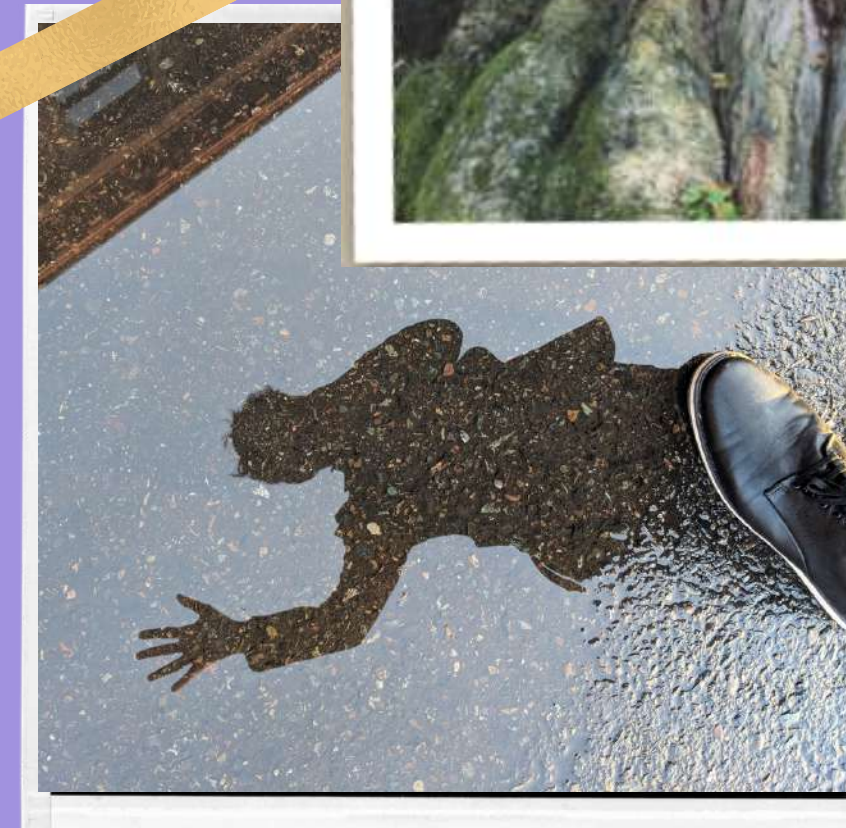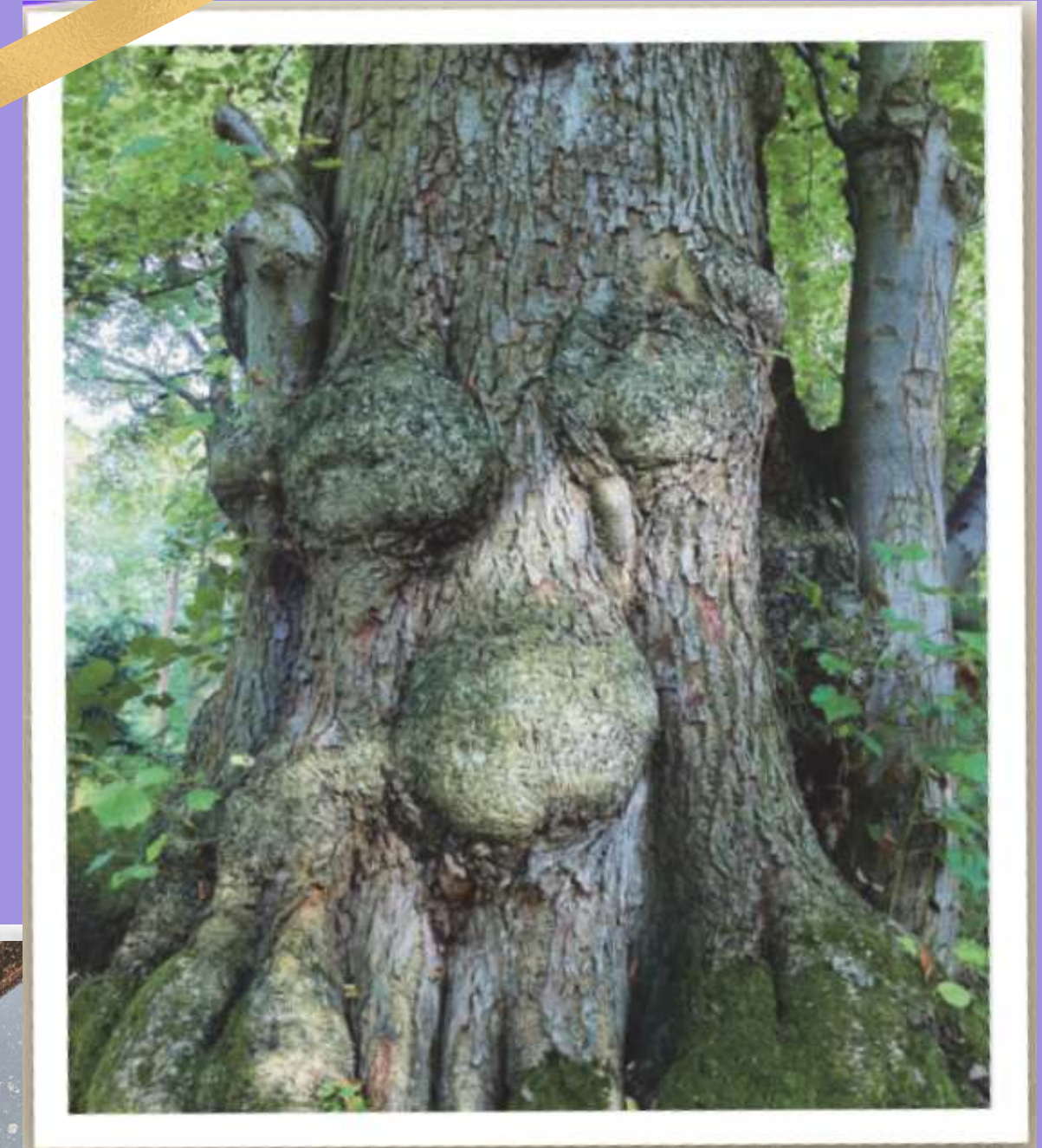
PHOTO SCAVENGER HUNT

Get your phone ready, get outside and race to take photos of:

1. The biggest tree
2. Something red
3. Your reflection
4. Something shiny
5. An animal
6. Something that begins with the first letter of your name
7. An interesting view of the sky
8. Something round
9. A pattern
10. Something that makes you smile

Or make up your own!

LOOKING AFTER OUR TREES

The Jersey Tree Strategy (2022) provides a framework for the future protection, management and enjoyment of trees in Jersey.

There are some things we can do as individuals to protect our trees:

- Find opportunities to plant more trees, making sure they are the right species and in the right place
- Use the online recording tool provided by the Jersey Biodiversity Centre to record where you plant new trees on a simple online map
- Look after existing trees
- Get involved in practical conservation work. A list of voluntary organisations that provide opportunities is available on gov.je
- Find out about the research that is helping to understand more about the fascinating world of trees. Dr Suzanne Simard's work is good place to start: www.mothertreeproject.org
- Get outside and enjoy our wonderful trees!

WHAT ARE TREES DREAMING OF?

Research shows us that trees can communicate, share resources and react to the world around them.

With these characteristics of intelligence, can trees dream?

What do you think trees dream of?

Please share your ideas with us. Your ideas can be written down or shared as artwork or photos.

Send an email with the title 'Dreaming Trees' to dfi@gov.je

We may share your ideas at the Dreaming Trees illuminations and in our communications. All ideas we share will be anonymous.

Thank you and enjoy Dreaming Trees 2024!

TREE JOKES

How does a tree get on the internet?

They log on!

What is every tree's favourite shape?

A tree-angle!

Why do you never want to invite a tree to your party?

Because they never leaf when you want them to!

What kind of tree can fit into your hand?

A palm tree!

How do trees make themselves heard?

Amp-leaf-ication!

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