DEESIDE TRAVELLING TINY FOREST

Deeside CAN, Summer 2021



Deeside Travelling Tiny Forest

Deeside CAN has created a Travelling Tiny Forest to raise awareness of climate change and biodiversity loss, what simple things can be done locally, the Tiny Forest movement and COP26.

Scientists are increasingly aware of important natural networks that store carbon and carry out other beneficial natural processes. Forest, soil, pasture and peatbogs all do this.

The Tiny Forest movement started in Japan where Akira Miyawaki discovered that a small site about the size of a tennis court, closely planted with different kinds of trees, can create a dense natural forest with minimal effort. These tiny forests can be planted in small areas in towns and cities and are hugely beneficial to soil, air, water and biodiversity.

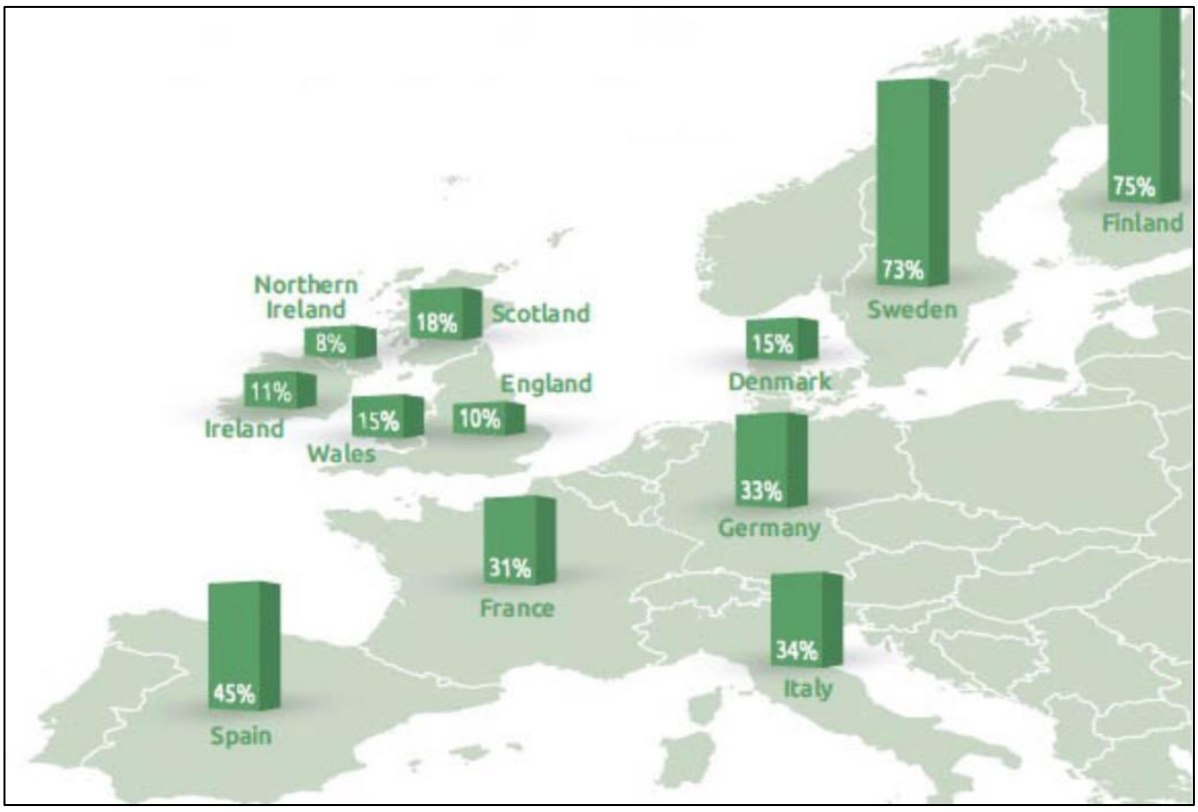
The Deeside Travelling Tiny Forest trees grow naturally in this area. After COP26 the trees will be planted in a suitable site in Deeside.

It is also called a Tiny Forest because tree planting is a very small part of what we can do. Soil and peatbogs can hold much more carbon that forests, but not all of the excess carbon. We also need to return some carbon to the earth in carbon capture and storage schemes.

Forest cover is low in UK, including Scotland

Compared to Europe, where forest cover is generally above 30%, England has only 10% average forest cover, whilst Scotland has 18% (up from 5% 100 years ago).

In 2019, the Scottish Government committed to increase forest cover to 21% by 2032, creating 3,000-5,000 hectares of new native woodland per year.
https://www.gov.scot/publications/scotlands-forestry-strategy-20192029/



Alder





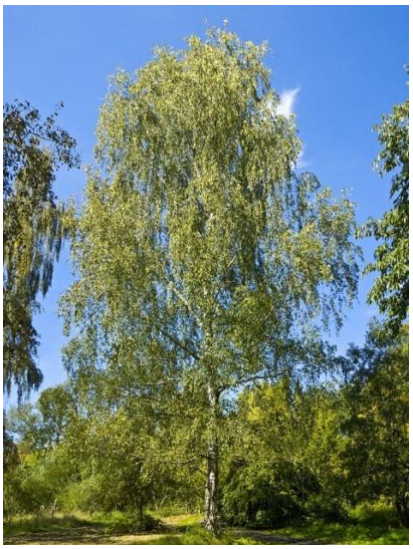
The alder is often found along riverbanks. It protects the banks from erosion and is a valuable habitat for riverside wildlife. It has nitrogen fixing bacteria on the roots and so benefits soil health.

If left to grow naturally, it can produce a dome shaped tree, but it is often coppiced, leaving a multi-stemmed tree.

In winter it has purplish male catkins. In spring it has female catkins which turn from red to green. In the autumn they produce small winged seeds.

Alder wood is durable and can survive periods of drying out and wetting. So traditionally it was used for pier pilings, lock gates and clogs. It made the best charcoal for gunpowder.

Birch





The birch is one of most recognisable and loved British tree. It is found further north than any other tree species. The birch is a pioneer species and a rapid coloniser of disturbed ground.

There are two main types of birch tree in Scotland. When young they look very similar but when older, the silver birch develops a weeping or pendulous habit where twigs and leaves hang down, and the downy birch does not do this. Birch woods are rich in fungi, some of which are almost exclusively associated with birch.

In winter the silver bark is very noticeable. Towards spring the twigs appear purplish. In spring the flowers appear as green catkins. In autumn they produce very small winged seeds which disperse over a wide area.

Birch wood is used for paper pulp, plywood, firewood and wood turning.

Crab Apple





The crab apple is a woodland and hedgerow tree.

It has sweet scented apple blossom in spring and small crab apples in autumn.

Crab apple trees support a wide range of wildlife, including mistletoe and lichens. Many moths feed on the leaves. Bees and other pollinators feed on the pollen and nectar early in the spring. Many birds and small mammals such as dormice eat the fruit in autumn.

Crab apple trees are associated with love and marriage.

Crab apple timber is hard and close grained and used for wood turning, wood carving and firewood.

Rowan





Rowan is a recognisable tree which is iconic in Scotland, with many associated myths and legends. It is often found by ruined crofts and shielings as traditionally it was planted by the door.

It grows in woodlands and in open land. It grows in a wide variety of soils apart from very wet ones. It often grows higher up on mountains compared to other species.

In spring there are dense flowerheads of white blossom. In autumn it has bright scarlet berries, which last after leaves have fallen. They provide a valuable source of food for birds. In autumn the leaves turn bright red if there has been a frost.

Wild cherry or gean





Geans grow in woods and copses, often in hilly areas.

In spring the white blossom opens just before the first leaves appear. In early summer red or red-black fruit appears, smaller and harder than cultivated cherries.

The timber is hard and strong and used for wood turning, veneers and furniture.

Scots Pine





Scots Pine is recognisable throughout Britain and iconic tree in Scotland. In Scotland it supports a unique assemblage of wildlife, especially the Scottish crossbill. This bird is only found in Scotland and its bill is adapted to extract pine seeds from cones. Scots pine woods are also home to capercaillies, red squirrels and pine martens.

Scots Pines are evergreens, and the long blue-green needles grow bunches of pairs along the twigs. Young trees are conical but as they age, they become more open. In older trees the bark higher up turns red or orange. The pine cones take several seasons to mature and shed their seeds.

Scots pine wood is called deal. As well as tables, the wood is used for pit props, telegraph poles, building, furniture, chip board and paper pulp.

Hazel





Hazel trees grow in woodlands and hedgerows. In woodlands they are a part of the understorey and important for wildlife. Their leaves support numerous moths. The nuts are especially important for the dormouse. Hazel trees are often coppiced for poles, and in woodlands multi stemmed hazel trees can be hundreds of years old.

Hazel trees have male catkins in autumn. In the spring they open and turn yellow. The female flowers are very small and red. In the autumn hazelnuts grow in bunches of one to four.

Beech





The beech was one of the last native trees to colonise the southern half of Britain. Elsewhere it was planted as an ornamental tree or in shelter belts, hedgerows and avenues. It self-seeds freely. It likes dry or free draining soil.

The leaves are vivid green in spring and darken in summer. Beech woods often support wild flowers which bloom in spring before the leaves open on the trees, such as bluebells and wood anemone. They also support orchids and many fungi. In the autumn they produce beech mast, some years much more than others, and in the past, this was an important source of food for pigs.

Beech wood is used for furniture.

Ash





In winter ash trees have large black buds at the ends of twigs and branches. The leaves are the last of any native tree to open in spring. In spring there are small purple flowers near the tips of twigs. In autumn there are bunches of single winged keys which last all winter.

Ash trees grow in woodlands, hedgerows and shelter belts. They used to be coppiced in semi-natural woodlands. Ash trees are under threat from Ash Dieback Disease.

Ash wood is white and durable and was used for farm implements, furniture, and the handles of tools that take a lot of strain such as pickaxes. It was also used for firewood.

Oak





Oak is a familiar tree across Britain. It was once common across Scotland, as attested in the many place names containing *darroch*, Gaelic for oak. Some ancient oak woodlands remain, especially on the west coast. Oak trees are slow growing and long lived. They can grow into large trees and in old age retract, leaving dead branches higher up in a tree which is still healthy.

Oak trees can dominate the landscape in many areas. There are two main kinds, although they both look very similar. The sessile oak has acorns which grow directly on the twig. It grows in hilly areas, poor soils, especially in the west of Britain. The English or pedunculate oak has acorns which grow on stalks. It prefers heavier soils.

Oak trees are hugely important for wildlife and support hundreds of different species.

Oak timber is high quality and durable. It is used for traditional timber framed buildings, furniture, flooring, barrels, charcoal and firewood. Oak bark was used for tanning.

About Deeside CAN

Deeside Climate Action Network – our aim is to care and nurture our communities, our environment, our planet.

We believe in a joyful reconnection with nature so we can consciously live more sustainably and safeguard our world for coming generations. We aim to help improve the quality of life and well-being of all while reducing unnecessary consumption and waste.

We want to show that we CAN.

Our vision is to help communities understand the huge benefits to be gained through making the natural environment central to all our decision making, by following ex-president Al Gore's three focusses:

- Our voices, to raise awareness
- Our votes, to pressure politicians to make the changes that we need
- Our choices, to live more sustainably

Deeside CAN is working on five projects at the moment

- Reducing our Carbon Footprint.
- Wildlife Friendly Village.
- Reducing Food waste.
- Deeside Way Green Walk.
- Deeside Travelling Tiny Forest.

Find out more at https://www.deesidecan.org.uk
And at https://www.facebook.com/DeesideCAN