

Season of Creation - Tree Actions

- keep dead wood whenever it is safe to do so; wildlife needs plenty of it
- give mature trees space: keep the area of 5 metres beyond the canopy free of storage, development or heavy trampling by livestock
- fertilisers damage root systems and lichens on veteran trees – give them wide berth when applying
- allow mature trees to develop in hedgerows and avoid flailing hedges every year
- keep and replant local varieties of fruit trees and use the produce
- plant trees that will not outgrow the space available to them
- choose species which are in harmony with the local landscape. Collect and plant seeds from local trees
- newly planted trees need to be watered, weeded and mulched to help them survive
- our climate is changing and long-lived trees will struggle to survive in a world of increased drought, high winds and shifting seasons. We can all help by reducing our own carbon emissions as much as we can
- grow from seeds from trees that thrive in your area
- grow replacement trees for trees lost through pest and disease
- improve the local landscape

The most important thing to remember is that most trees are easy to grow from seed, give it a go and see what happens...

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Trees are an essential and integrated part of planet Earth. They have many purposes, including providing shelter, food and other resources that enhance human and non-human life.

But they also have an intrinsic value in themselves. Trees are a source of beauty and worth. They inspire poetry, art and music.

For Christians, trees are part of God-given nature and the symbolism of the tree in church life is rich and diverse. From Genesis to Revelation trees are referred to, especially as places of refreshment, healing, nourishment and peace.

“Rest yourselves under the tree” (Genesis 18:4)

In today’s world, we need to preserve and replenish trees and forests, especially in relation to climate change. They can form a significant part of a low-carbon culture for the future. So let us act to plant and protect trees – where we live, here in Devon and elsewhere.

Let us plant trees when we celebrate a wedding, when someone is baptized, as Christmas or birthday gifts, even when someone dies. To plant a tree is to make a statement of hope about the future.

“There is hope with a tree, if it be cut down that it will grow again and that its shoots will not cease”. (Job 14:7)

Season of Creation - Tree Reflections

Psalm 104 [adapted for Dartmoor]

Praise the Lord, O my soul, Lord my God, you are very great;
He set the earth on its foundations and clothed it with waters.
He established the uplands and the valleys.
He makes grass grow for the cattle, and plants for us to cultivate – bringing forth food from the earth:
Wine that gladdens our hearts, oil to make our faces shine,
and bread that sustains the heart.
The trees of the Lord are well watered, the rowan of the moor he tends.
There the birds make their nests; the heron has its home in the trees.
The high tors belong to the ring ouzel; the crags are a refuge for the ponies.
The moon marks off the seasons and the sun knows when to go down.
You bring darkness, it becomes right, and the owls glide over the moor.
The foxes hunt for their prey and seek their food from God.
The sun rises, and they steal away; they return and lie down in their dens.
Then people go out to their work, to their labour until evening.
How many are your works, O Lord! In wisdom you made them all;
the earth is full of your creatures.
These all look to you to give them their food at the proper time.
When you give it to them, they gather it up; when you open your hand,
they are satisfied with good things.
When you hide your face, they are terrified;
When you take them away their breath, they die and return to the dust.
When you send your Spirit, they are created,
and you renew the face of the earth.

May the glory of the Lord endure for ever; may the Lord rejoice in his works.
I will sing to the Lord all my life; I will sing praise to my God as long as I live.

“I am struck by the fact that the more slowly trees grow at first, the sounder they are at the core, and I think that the same is true of human beings. We do not wish to see children precocious, making great strides in their early years like sprouts, producing a soft and perishable timber, but better if they expand slowly at first, as if contending with difficulties, and so are solidified and perfected. Such trees continue to expand with nearly equal rapidity to extreme old age.”
- Henry David Thoreau

Confession:

Leader: We have not cherished the earth,
we have ignored its intricate wonder,
dimmed in its splendour and marred its beauty
and given no thought to tomorrow:

All: Father God, have mercy on your children

Leader: We have become obsessed with what we possess
and possessed by what we yet want;
we waste earth's precious resources whilst
many want and in our failure to act gamble its future well-being

All: Jesus, Son of God, save us from ourselves

Leader: We have lived as if every other living thing
only has breath for our benefit;
we pollute the teeming waters,
cut down the living forest
and condemn your creatures to extinction.

All: Holy Spirit of God, teach us to live in peace

Leader: As the warm, bright rays of the sun
scatter the mist from the hills and tors,
cast the darkness from our lives,
that we may live as children of light.

All: In the name of Christ. Amen.