



Press Release
22nd November 2013

PLANT THE DIFFERENCE

National Tree Week 2013
Saturday 23rd November – Sunday 1st December

At the time of year when many life forms are thinking about hibernating or shutting down for a rest, The Tree Council wants everyone to wake up to the importance of trees and take action. The Tree Council's National Tree Week is a celebration of trees and a call to arms for the bare-root tree planting season. In particular, it is an opportunity to remind everyone of the strength that comes from diversity in both the trees they plant and the communities they plant alongside.

This year, with *Chalara fraxinea* taking hold on the ash population, an important key to tree survival in the face of pests and diseases is going to be diversity of our tree stock. Already, trials are underway to see if any ash trees can be found that are resistant to the dieback; this hope is only feasible because of the slight differences in DNA sequences that arise through cross-pollination. Where there is a predominance of ash trees in the landscape, losses will be more noticeable and gaps, difficult to replace. The logical way forward for planters is to consider variety and diversity in their planting plans, Diversity is what will make our landscape resilient and our wildlife, healthy.

Tree planters can be just as diverse as the saplings they are planting. No matter what their age and regardless of their capabilities, people from all walks of life can make an important contribution to the quality of life for themselves and their neighbours by getting involved in community tree planting - or even taking the initiative for themselves. There are reasons to plant trees for every culture, faith and demographic. By coming together to make the environment better, in urban or rural locations, communities can share a common aim and plant the difference.

Pauline Buchanan Black, Director-General of The Tree Council said "Trees are important to people and vital to wildlife for many reasons. Alone or in woodland, in town and country, they are essential for the survival of many species. Some creatures, such as the Dormouse, are particularly associated with a tree habitat. In particular, the hazel provides food, home and a corridor along which Dormice can move without coming down to ground level. Trees with fruit and seeds are also important for bird life whilst those with nectar-rich flowers ensure the survival of insects and pollinators.

Some life forms live in the trees, some live under and others survive because of them. To all of us, in our diverse shapes and sizes, trees mean life. It's National Tree Week – go out and plant the difference!".

ENDS

See over for further information

NOTES TO EDITORS:

1. For **further information**, please contact (press enquiries only)

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2. **National Tree Week**

The **39th annual National Tree Week will run from 23rd November to 1st December 2013** and marks the launch of the bare root tree planting season. Forty years ago, *Plant a Tree in '73* carried a message of landscape repopulation in the wake of Dutch Elm Disease, which had already wiped out more than 20 million of our most significant landscape trees. The year-long operation was run collaboratively by organisations under the banner of the *Green Survival Campaign* which, the following January, generated *The Tree Council* to carry on the work (*Plant Some More in '74*). **National Tree Week** became the annual celebration to raise awareness and appreciation as well as encourage planting every year since.

Every year, upward of half a million adults and children take part in thousands of events across the UK, arranged by Tree Council member organisations, many of its 8000 volunteer Tree Wardens, local community groups and schools. Most events involve tree planting, but many also use other ways of raising tree awareness such as woodland walks, tree identification tours, workshops, talks, tree surveys as well as Wood Fairs with woodturning demonstrations and storytelling. Many local authorities also give out free tree packs to those who wished to plant their own.

Visit **The Tree Council's website**, <http://www.treecouncil.org.uk/> for details of **local National Tree Week events** and tips on tree planting and aftercare. Event information is also available from the Tree Council infoline, 020 7940 8180 (office hours)

<http://www.treecouncil.org.uk/press-and-news/item/4548-tweet-for-nationaltreeweek>

3. **The Tree Council**

Environmental charity **The Tree Council** is the UK's lead charity for trees in all settings, urban and rural, promoting their importance in a changing environment and it works in partnership with communities, organisations and government to make trees matter to everyone. As the coalition body for over 180 organisations working together for trees, it focuses on getting more trees, of the right kind, in the right places; better care for all trees of all ages and inspiring effective action for trees.

It works with its national volunteer **Tree Warden Scheme** and member organisations to engage people in biodiversity and environmental issues and to promote planting and conservation of trees and woods in town and country. A major part of this is achieved through its annual **Community Action Programme** that includes Walk in the Woods month, Seed Gathering Season and **National Tree Week** (first run in March 1975), and through supporting groups organising local events.

It operates a tree-planting grants programme for UK schools and communities to plant trees and create woodland habitats, as well as working on an agenda for change that includes its annual Tree Care Campaign, the Green Monuments Campaign and Hedge Tree Campaign.

4. **Chalara fraxinea (ash dieback)**

The latest information from Defra and the Forestry Commission on the disease and its impact can be found at <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/chalara>.