



Press Release
For Immediate Release

ARE YOU ROOTING FOR TREES?

Take a walk in the woods this May and experience all the good things trees do for us

Birds are singing, trees are coming into blossom and the bluebells are out: it's the perfect time of year for a walk in the woods.

Every May, The Tree Council encourages people to get outside and enjoy the trees in their neighbourhoods by taking a walk in their local woods, parks and public gardens. This year is no exception and community groups, local authorities, environmental organisations and Tree Warden networks will be organising guided woodland walks and tree trails up and down the country.

Walk in the Woods Month (1st to 31st May 2016) presents the perfect opportunity for people to find out more about trees and the many benefits they bring us, at the same time as enjoying a breath of fresh air and some outdoor exercise.

Trees enhance any landscape, promote healthy lifestyles and provide a vital habitat for wildlife. In urban areas trees improve air quality by removing pollutants from the atmosphere, reducing solar radiation and lowering the air temperature in summer. ¹ There's also evidence to suggest that people who live near trees get along better with their neighbours, feel safer and experience fewer crimes. ²

The theme of this year's Walk in the Woods festival is 'Rooting for Trees': the more that people understand and experience the benefit of trees on their patch, the more confident they will be in conserving, campaigning and standing up for them as well as being inspired to plant more. The importance of engaging a local community with its trees can really be a matter of life and death.

Most people don't have to travel far to find a wood, nature reserve or other green space. In fact, there are a surprising number of woods within towns and cities. For a bit of inspiration, take a look at this [BBC video](#) of London's Sydenham Hill Wood with Pauline Buchanan Black, director general of The Tree Council, and Daniel Greenwood, warden for London Wildlife Trust.

Details of Walk in the Woods 2016 events can be found on The Tree Council's [Near You map](#).

Images are available upon request.

References:

¹ Defra statistics 2010 <http://laqm.defra.gov.uk/laqm-faqs/faq105.html>

² Kuo, F.E., Sullivan, W.C., Coley, R.L., & Brunson, L. (1998). Fertile ground for community: Inner-city neighborhood common spaces. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 26(6), 823-851.

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Visit The Tree Council's website, <http://www.treecouncil.org.uk/> for details on each of the community action programmes. Event information is also available from the Tree Council info line, 020 7940 8180 (office hours).

2. About The Tree Council's Walk in the Woods Month

In May every year, community groups, environmental organisations, local authorities and volunteer Tree Wardens organise Walks in the Woods – events as diverse as bluebell trails and healthy walking routes, bat and badger watches, treasure hunts, tree trails and woodland open days.

It is also an annual reminder that more trees and woodlands need to be planted now if there are to be any for future generations to enjoy. Walkers should keep to pathways, not trespass on private land and remember that trees and woods are home to flora and fauna that must be shown respect.

For further information and a copy of the poster, please visit the Walk in the Woods pages on The Tree Council's website, <http://www.treecouncil.org.uk/community-action/walk-in-the-woods> or call us on 020 7407 9992 (office hours).

For a list of Walk in the Woods and other events taking place around the country, visit <http://www.treecouncil.org.uk/community-action/events-map>. Images available on request.

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.