

This activity contributes to the following badges:



Beaver My World Challenge Award



Cub Our World Challenge Award



Scout Naturalist Activity Badge, Scout Forester Activity Badge

The activity could also help towards:



Community Impact Staged Activity Badge



Beaver Global Issues Activity Badge (if linked to endangered animals)



Cub Global Issues Activity Badge (if linked to endangered animals)



Cub Naturalist Activity Badge



Explorer Naturalist Activity Badge

Beavers | Cubs | Scouts

# Forest amnesty

International Day of Forests, 21 March Take your section for a walk in the woods to discover more about trees

**Time: 90 minutes**

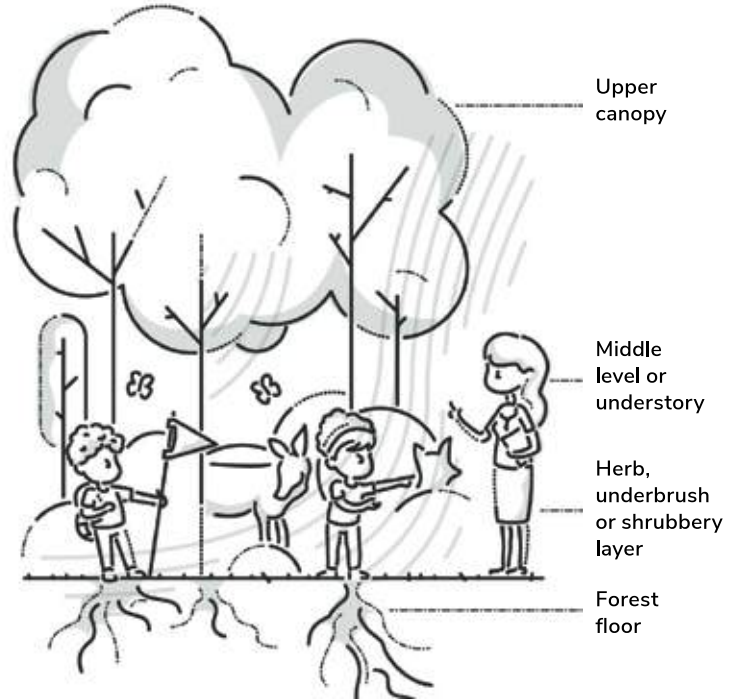
## Instructions

**1** Discuss with your young people some important facts about forests, e.g.

- Trees account for about 30% of the Earth's surface.
- In the UK, tree coverage accounts for 13% of land.
- The European average is nearly half-covered in trees (44%). Finland has the highest level (72%).
- Tree-coverage has increased dramatically in the UK since World War II. But worldwide, deforestation is taking place for a variety of reasons such as clearing the land for growing palm oil, farming, or building housing.
- To bring the UK more in line with European levels, the Woodland Trust launched a campaign in 2010 to plant 20 million trees in Britain for the next five decades.
- A useful website for more information is: [un.org/en/events/forestsday](http://un.org/en/events/forestsday).

**2** Help your young people explore the importance of our forests and the benefits of trees to humans and animals by taking them to a local forest, woodland or park.

Apart from cleaning the air and producing the oxygen we need to breathe, trees also provide habitats for animals and spending time in forests or woodland can have mental health benefits for people.



**3** Once there, help them to identify the different levels of the trees (e.g. forest floor, canopy), some of the animals that live there, and the trees themselves. Resources like the Wildlife Trusts' Nature Finder app can help you identify trees, animals and insects. (See our feature in the autumn term issue of Scouting magazine for other useful apps and websites for helping young people to engage with nature.)

**4** Have a discussion with the young people about issues like deforestation, how forests/trees are being destroyed around the world, and the local and global impact of this. Ask them if

they would miss the trees, and why they think they are so important to both humans and the environment.

## Take it further

This activity links to UN Global Goal #15: Life on Land, through protecting and restoring terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably managing forests, combating desertification, and halting biodiversity loss. Learn more at [globalgoals.org](http://globalgoals.org). Get in touch with your local park warden or council to learn more about how to protect your local woodland and get involved in a community project, or join a scheme to plant or adopt a tree.