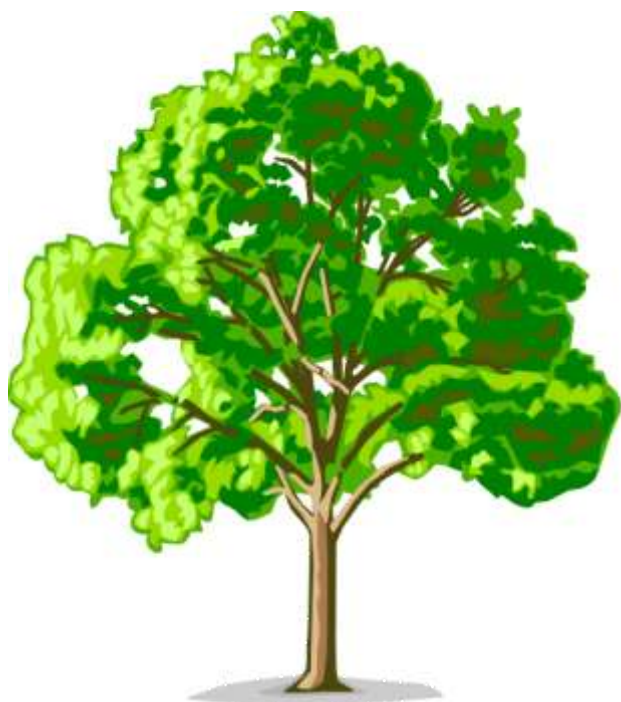


# We Need Trees and Trees Need Us!

Look out of your window and you'll probably be able to see a tree. You might have a tree growing in your garden. You'll pass lots of trees each day when you go to school. Your school probably has some trees growing in the school grounds. There may even be a wood near you where you go for walks or to play. Because there are so many trees around, we tend to take them for granted, but this is not a good idea. Trees are vital to the well-being of everyone on this planet, but we are losing millions of trees every year and they need our help.



**Why are trees so important?** Top of the list is the fact that trees help stop climate change. The carbon dioxide from traffic and industry builds up in the atmosphere and causes climate change, but just small forest can take in the same amount of carbon dioxide produced by a car driving 26,000 miles! Trees also absorb other polluting gases and filter out deadly particulates from engine emissions by trapping them on their bark and leaves. And not only that, at the same small forest of trees produces enough oxygen for 18 people.

Trees help us in our fight against climate change in other ways. When planted in city streets they provide shade and break up 'heat islands', which reduces the energy required for air conditioning.





Trees help protect the countryside as well. On hillsides, trees slow rainwater run-off and stop the soil being eroded. By slowing down this run-off they reduce the risk of flooding and also stop the fertiliser used in fields from being washed into our streams and rivers.

Many trees, both in this country and around the world, provide us with food. Papaya, mangoes, oranges, limes, lemons, peaches, coconuts, cashews, apples and more all come from trees. And they also provide a good source of wood. Hard-wood such as oak and ash is used to make furniture and tools. Soft-wood such as fir or spruce which are used in the building of houses.



Trees provide a haven for wildlife and encourage biodiversity. A huge variety of insects live in trees. Birds roost or nest in the trees and feed on those insects. Other animals shelter in or beneath the trees or feed on their nuts, berries or fruit. Trees are at the centre of the wildlife ecosystem.

Finally, trees are important for our own well-being. Trees planted in a residential area makes it a pleasanter environment in which to live. Studies have shown that careful planting of trees in a new housing estate reduces the level of stress for the people living there and also results in lower levels of crime. If groups of trees are planted carefully, unsightly eyesores can be blocked from view. Trees are also a great place to build a playhouse!



So you see, trees really are important.