



Blog it! If you can take pictures of them and find out stories, that's even better. Every tree can have its own blog.



So, what's so special about fat, old trees?

How old is old? As old as your granny? Even older! You might find a tree that's 500 years old or even more. Imagine all the things that have happened during its lifetime.

Because they are old and wrinkly with rotten bits, lots of plants and animals and creepy crawlies live on them. Some of these creatures, maybe as many as 200 different species, are so special and unusual they can't live anywhere else.

Yes! Then you're on to a winner!

How do I know if it's old enough for your map? Is it REALLY fat? Would it take at least 3 grown ups or 5 or 6 children to stretch all the way round it in a big hug, finger tip to finger tip? Does it make you go 'Wow - that's REALLY fat', like this one.



Wherever you are, whoever you are we want YOU to hunt for fat old trees and then put them on our fab new interactive web map with just a click of your mouse. Every tree recorded is another piece of treasure found. They are living treasures and might be as much as 1000 years old.

Can you

Why?

They are some of the oldest living things on the planet, and guess what? We *think* Britain has more of them than many other European countries.

We don't know for sure, that's why we need your help to find them and map them. We know where all our old buildings are and they are protected by law, but old trees aren't, even if they are *1000 years old*, and that can't be right can it?

Did you know?

We hardly know anything about ancient trees. People are still looking and arguing and learning and being amazed by them. They are still making up names for types of old trees. Can you match up the names with the drawings? (images to come)

Phoenix tree Eiffel Tower Tree Cuckoo tree or air tree, honey tree, Walking tree, Cage Tree, a Bundle, a pollard.

www.ancientreehunt.org.uk
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The Ancient Tree Hunt
Mapping a future for ancient trees



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WANTED

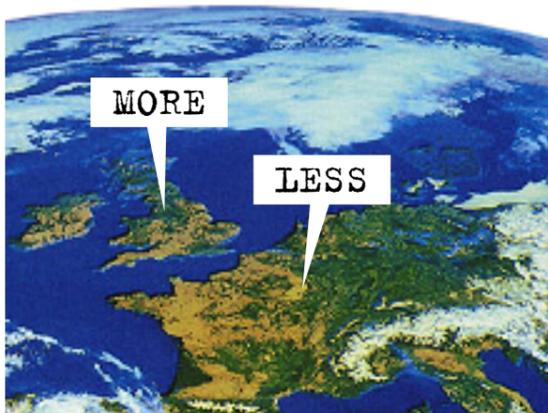


500,000
Ancient trees to be found
(AND HUGGED)

The Ancient Tree Hunt

about fat, old trees?

But being old, wrinkly and rotten means the trees are often cut down or treated badly along with all the creatures that live on them. If we can find them and put them on a map we can get people to start to take notice of them and care for them.



Possible European ancient tree distribution

First, find your fat old tree. Then...

Hug it!

Try and find the tree's waist – the narrowest point. Hug it. How many people does it take to go all the way round, finger tip to finger tip? Did you know your height is just about the same as the distance between your finger tips if you stretch your arms out? Can you work out how fat your tree is? You could use a tape measure of course but that would be boring...

Walk in it!

Walk all the way round it, you might find you can get inside if it's hollow, you might find fungi or all sorts of surprises (or your friend coming the other way) What does it feel like to be inside a hollow tree? If you were an animal would it make a good home?? Can you name some birds and animals that nest or roost in hollow trees? They say Robin Hood once lived in a hollow tree in a secret part of Sherwood Forest – would you like to live inside one?

Date it!

Like people, every tree grows at a different rate so it is hard to tell how old it is without cutting it down and counting the rings. And if it's a hollow tree the middle rings may have long disappeared. But use our chart for a rough guide. Then draw out a timeline for your tree. What sorts of things have happened in its lifetime – in your town or village? In the world? You could put your birth and those of your parents, grandparents and even great grandparents on the timeline too! You could play the Trees Memory game at <http://www.naturedetectives.org.uk/play/games/treesmemory.htm> to give you some ideas. Try and find out if your tree has a name locally. Ask some older people if they have any stories about it. You can put all this sort of stuff on our website, the more the better.

Have fun!

You might like to **give your tree a name** – try and think of a name that will make it a local celebrity/hero. Here are some examples – Big Belly, The Queen Elizabeth I Oak, The Parliament Oak, The Crinoline Lady. If it's a really special tree in your area, name it after your neighbourhood, town or village.

Lead your friends on a **blindfold walk** through the trees or around your tree. Make sure they get plenty of time to listen and touch and smell. Can they tell the difference between the big trees and the small trees just by standing under them and listening? We know a man who can! Can they find your tree again when you take the blindfold off?

If there are lots of crevices and holes at the base of the tree made by the roots, **build a world for tiny people** in amongst them using twigs and leaves and stones. Imagine they live in the tree. Or build a den using branches and leaves that are lying around.

If it's the type of tree you can **climb**, spend a bit of time in its branches, or just lean against the trunk. We guarantee you'll feel better afterwards. Put your ear against the trunk, especially in spring time when the sap is rising. Can you hear anything?

Shout at it!

If you shout when you are inside it probably won't echo? Why is that? Drumming on a hollow tree with a stick makes a very different sound to drumming on one that isn't hollow. Can you think why that might be? You could make your own forest beat by choosing different trees to drum on.

Look up at it!

Is it very knobbly just above your head? It might be a pollard. This means it has been a very hard working tree and its branches have been chopped off and used. The branches grew again, up high where animals couldn't eat the young shoots, and then 10-20 years later could then be chopped off again – and so it went on, perhaps for hundreds of years. This pollarding left lots of knobbly bits where the branches regrow. Pollards aren't as fat as other trees of their age as they have been busy using their energy to grow new branches.

Go barking!

You'd be barking not to do more with the bark. Get some paper and a crayon, press the paper on the bark and rub the crayon. You should get a bark rubbing. Cut them out to make collages, cards or frames for photos of your trees.

Get a wodge of plasticine and press it gently onto the bark. Peel it off carefully and you should get a great imprint. You could cast this in plaster of paris for a permanent reminder.

Before you go

Read a book to get in the mood – here's some ideas from Woodland Trust families to get you started.

The Faraway Tree (Enid Blyton), *Winnie the Pooh*, *Wind in the Willows*, *The Minpins* (Roald Dahl), *Harry Potter*, *Lord of the Rings*, *Wolf Brother*, *Spirit Walker* and *Soul Eater* (Michelle Paver) Email us if you find others.

Put a collecting bag in your pocket – for that special leaf/twig/acorn/slug you want to bring home. Actually, not the slug, he'd get homesick. You can download a leaf bag template from www.naturedetectives.org.uk/play/craft/leafbag.htm

Take a look at the hunt web site and see if you can go and visit one of the trees that is already recorded there. Each tree has information that tells you whether or not it is on land that is open to the public

And when you get back home...

Put your tree on our map at www.ancientreehunt.org.uk

If you go to see a tree that has already been recorded, don't forget to tell us that you visited it and what you thought about it. Tell your friends and family to go looking for trees too. You could get your class involved in the hunt too. Tell your teachers that there are great **FREE** resources they can use at www.ancientreehunt.org.uk

Get some great craft ideas, games and much more at www.naturedetectives.org.uk

Tell everyone to look out for the fattest, oldest things on the planet...

Look around it!

Look around and down. Can you see any fungi? You might see fungi brackets – they are the ones that stick out like shelves on the side of the trunk. They can produce millions of spores that might look like dust beneath it. OR can you see other types of fungi - toadstools or mushrooms? There's a whole world going on just under the soil with miles and miles of fibres connecting the tree roots to fungi. We just get to see a tiny bit – the fruiting bits. The fungi and the tree feed each other (and then slugs and snails eat the fungi) and are AMAZING!

Step back a bit!

(Look out, mind you don't trip over). Can you see any faces or shapes in the bark? Or maybe the whole tree looks like a dancer or a witch? Stand in a line with a few of your friends, one in front of the other. Bend your bodies and stretch out your arms and try and make the same shape as the tree. You might need one person to boss you about a bit till you get it right.

Find a palm tree!

Look at the lines on the palm of your hand. Can you see a tree shape? Try and find a tree that matches your palm. It can be your own palm tree.

Go nuts!

Want to know what sort of tree it is? Look for leaves and fruit/nuts on or under the tree, or the buds on twigs, take photos, collect samples (from the ground, but don't pull bits off the tree, that might hurt it – ouch!), draw pictures. Get a Woodland Trust leaf identification swatch or visit www.BritishTrees.org.uk and do some detective work. Take your friends and family for a walk past your tree and impress them with your new found tree knowledge.

How old is it?

Oak tree ready reckoner

Girth of tree in metres and centimetres	Equals Estimated age in years	Historical connections
1m 85cm	76	1930, George V, Amy Johnson's solo flight to Australia
1m 98cm	80	1926, George V, Year of the General Strike
2m 48cm	103	1903, Edward VII, First manned flight by the Wright Brothers
3m 10cm	138	1868, Victoria, Thomas Edison patented his 1st invention, an electric voice machine
3m 70cm	181	1825, George IV, Stockton to Darlington Railway opens (1st in the world)
4m 33cm	232	1815, George III, British victory over Napoleon at the Battle of Waterloo
4m 95cm	291	1715, George I
5m 58cm	368	
6m 20cm	433	
6m 80cm	515	
7m 43cm	606	
8m 03cm	704	