

Amazing Trees

Trees are all around us. Do we notice them? Have you ever stopped and wondered what might be happening within the trees around us? Beneath the leaf? Beneath the soil? Trees are truly amazing.

1. A tree stores vast resources of sugars, nutrients and minerals within the timber. Insects and fungi want to access this. Some trees have a way of defending themselves and some don't.

Q. Why would a fungus wish to access the nutrients within a tree?

Q. Can a fungus accessing nutrients within a tree be beneficial to the tree?

Q. What happens if a fungus attack when a tree is not ready?

Q. What tree resists the attack, and how?

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2. Fruit trees such as apple trees can be vulnerable to an attack by a particularly aggressive fungus called 'Silver Leaf'. The way we prune these trees can help them, or hinder them.

Q. How can Silver Leaf damage a fruit tree?

Q. How does the tree defend itself?

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- 3 **Beech trees are often giants in the landscape. Their foliage and smooth bark are a distinct feature. Yet despite this, they can be vulnerable to decay, to sun stroke!**

Q. Why is a Beech tree vulnerable to decay?

Q. How does a Beech tree reduce competition for nutrients from seedlings?

Q. Why can hot weather affect a Beech tree?

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3. Some of the trees around us keep their leaves all year round. They are always green and are called 'evergreen' trees. Others shed their leaves in the autumn. They are called 'deciduous' trees. Why is this approach effective and how do deciduous trees make use of the process?

Q. What is a deciduous tree?

Q. How does it benefit from having new leaves each year?

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5. Seeds are the basis of much of our plant life. We can sow them in our gardens for flowering plants and for food plants such as lettuce and runner beans. In order to germinate, all seeds need three ingredients. One of these can be surprising.

Q. Why is warmth important to seed germination?

Q. Why is light NOT needed?

Q. Why is oxygen important?

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6 Buds. When a leaf is shed, it leaves behind it a bud. Within that bud is the new leaf, carefully packed away. All that is needed for the new leaf to emerge is a flow of sap. Flat pack before IKEA was invented!

Q. What is packed in to the bud?

Q. What is needed for the leaf to emerge?

Q. Why is the bud casing needed?

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7. Ancient Woodlands are rather special. They are features in the landscape that have remained in place since the first definitive maps were produced in 1600. To put this in to context, a woodland was established in the location in Tudor times, when Henry VIII. These places are special. They often contain very old trees, our ancient specimens. The soil is often undisturbed over the centuries. With some woodlands, it has never been disturbed. It becomes home to some very fragile and rare species of flora and fauna.

Q. Why is ancient woodland so important?

Q. Why is ancient woodland irreplaceable?

Q. Why is the Beech woodland unlikely to be truly ancient?

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8. Leaf fall in the autumn is a sign of the changing seasons. Gusts of wind cause vast quantities of leaves to be blown from the trees, in to the air, before falling to the ground. Yet for each leaf to fall, something remarkable happens.

Q. What does the tree do to the sugars and nutrients stored in each leaf before leaf fall?

Q. What does the tree deposit in the leaf before leaf fall?

Q. How does the tree cause a separation to occur between the twig and the leaf?

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9. Pruning is something we can do for a variety of reasons. It provides form and shape to trees and shrubs. It removes dead wood. It provides space. There is, however, a right and a wrong way to prune. And a right and a wrong time!

Q. How does the direction of pruning cut help the tree?

Q. What happens if you prune a tree in the wrong place?

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