

Shrinking Forest Game Instructions

This game is a good way to show the interaction between humans, trees, the forest ecosystem and all the inhabitants that rely on it.

You will need some space and at least 5 trees for the students to stand under. A whistle is handy if you have one!

Print the card images of 5 trees and 25 animals/birds/insects. You are the forester!

Steps to the play the game:

1. Choose five people to be trees. Give each of them one of the five tree pictures (Holly, Cherry, Ash, Scots Pine, Oak).
2. Ask the trees to spread out around yard/lawn.
3. The remaining children will be animals (ask for suggestions about which animals and birds live in Irish forests e.g. fox, badger, owl).
3. Ask the 'animals' to stand by a 'tree', spreading themselves out among all five trees.
4. When you blow the whistle, the animals move to a different tree. Do this a few times.
5. Next, ask the animals to shelter under their tree from the rain.
6. Pretend someone has called you on the mobile phone. It is a carpenter, who needs a holly tree to make a table. You cut down the wood from a holly tree, and the animals move to shelter under a different tree.
7. Next, the animals drink some raindrops dripping from the trees when you get another call. This time it is a famous singer, who needs a cherry tree to make a



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guitar. Cut down the wood from a cherry tree, and the animals move to a different tree.

8. Now, the animals breathe in oxygen produced by the trees leaves. Then you get a call from a lady who wants some ash to make hurleys, so you cut down the ash tree.

9. The animals are now (pretending carefully!) eating leaves and seeds from the remaining trees, when your phone rings again. This time it is a builder who needs some Scots Pine to make roof beams for a house. You cut down the scots pine and all the animals move to the remaining tree.

10. All the animals are now at the oak tree.

Discuss: Who can remember all the things that the animals and the people needed trees for? What would happen to the animals if all the trees were cut down?

What does the Coillte need to do to ensure that we don't run out of trees? (plant new ones – this is called sustainable forestry)

Trees are important for people to make things – why else are trees and forests good for people? (places to do activities, shade, prevention of flooding and erosion)