

# Forests and Biodiversity

# Forests and Products

ACTIVITY



## Shrinking Forest Instructions

This game is a good way to show the interaction between humans and trees. It explores the forest ecosystem and the inhabitants that live within.

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

### In advance:

Print the images of 5 trees provided. Laminate if possible so they can be reused.  
Optional – print 25 animal/bird/insect images (could use cards from Web of Life Activity).

## Steps:

1. Choose five students to be the trees. Give each of them one of the five tree images (**Holly, Cherry, Ash, Scots Pine, Oak**).
2. Ask the trees to spread out around yard/lawn/park.
3. The remaining students will be animals (ask for suggestions about which animals and birds live in Irish forests e.g. fox, badger, owl, pine martin, squirrel, wren).
4. Ask the 'animals' to stand by a 'tree', spreading themselves out among all five trees.
5. When you blow the whistle, the animals move to a different tree. Do this a few times to warm up.
6. Next, ask the animals to shelter under their tree from the rain.
7. 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.
8. 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 guitar. Cut down the wood from a cherry tree, and the animals move to a different tree. If time is available, you can explain more about the interaction between Forests & Water.
9. 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. If time is available, you can explain more about the interaction between Forests & Climate.
10. The animals are now 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.
11. **All the animals are now at the oak tree.** How did this happen? What happens if the oak is cut down or falls over in a storm? Where do the animals go?



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### 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 do we need to do to ensure that we don't run out of trees?

Practice sustainable forestry and continuous canopy cover.

When we cut down trees, we need to replant more trees.

We could also plant more native broadleaf trees, that grow back when they are cut (coppiced).

Trees are important for people to make things – why else are trees and forests good for people?

Places to relax, to be in nature, home to a lot of biological diversity, provide shade, prevent flooding and soil erosion, absorb carbon – they are a carbon sink, they help to cool down the planet, provide building and other materials, etc.

### Research Project Suggestions:

- Where is deforestation happening in the world?
- Investigate sustainable alternatives, such as Continuous Canopy Cover, Agro-forestry, Permaculture Design Systems, etc.
- How are these issues linked to The Global Goals (Sustainable Development Goals)?



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## FACILITATOR SHEET

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### Ash – Fearnóg



*Fraxinus excelsior* foliage and seeds

Photo: Jesmond Dene, Newcastle, Northumberland, UK, Aug 2005



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## FACILITATOR SHEET

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### Cherry Tree – Crann Silíní



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### Holly – Cuileann



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### Oak – Dair



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### Scots Pine - Crann Réine Albanach



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