

# GIVE TREES A CHANCE

**Newsletter | November 2019**



**Friends of  
the Earth  
Manchester**

**Why we need more trees**

**Our health and trees**

**What to plant and where  
to get started**

**Sourcing sustainable paper**

**Make it a tree-friendly  
Christmas, and more...**





# Why Trees?

We all need more trees! Wherever you live, trees have a wide range of benefits, which you can learn more about inside this newsletter. In our city centres, trees help absorb air pollutants and cool the air in heatwaves. In our suburbs, trees enhance the value of open spaces for exercise and recreation, improving our physical and mental health. In our countryside, trees retain moisture in the soil and thus reduce the risk of grass fires in droughts and floods after heavy rain. These are all important reasons for planting more trees here in Greater Manchester.

Our need for trees is urgent! We don't just need to reduce our carbon emissions by converting from fossil fuels to renewable energy, minimising our meat and dairy consumption and cutting our car mileage. We also need to absorb some of the carbon already in the atmosphere, and one of the easiest and most effective ways of doing this is by planting trees.

But we don't have enough trees! If all the European countries are ranked in terms of their tree cover, the UK comes in fourth from bottom with a mere 11.8%. In contrast, Germany, Italy, France and Spain all have respectable totals of between 31% and 37%<sup>1</sup>. We need to catch up quickly!

This is why Friends of the Earth have just launched the new Trees campaign. The aim of this campaign is to double the UK's tree cover over the next 25 years. This will not only make our towns and countryside greener, healthier and more attractive places to live, work and enjoy nature, but also absorb around 10% of the country's current carbon emissions<sup>2</sup>. Let's get planting trees!

<sup>1</sup> [www.forestresearch.gov.uk/tools-and-resources/statistics/forestry-statistics/forestry-statistics-2019/international-forestry/forest-cover-international-comparisons/](http://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/tools-and-resources/statistics/forestry-statistics/forestry-statistics-2019/international-forestry/forest-cover-international-comparisons/)

<sup>2</sup> [friendsoftheearth.uk/climate-change/doubling-trees-will-help-stop-climate-chaos](http://friendsoftheearth.uk/climate-change/doubling-trees-will-help-stop-climate-chaos)

# A City of Trees?

The evidence is clear. Trees help create healthier, happier communities and reconnect people to the natural world. They provide essential habitats for wildlife. Trees help tackle climate change, reduce flooding and improve air quality. Trees and woods are also good for education and the economy. Did you know that forestry in Scotland alone is a £1 billion sector and employs 25,000 people. See Friends of the Earth's briefing: 'What's so good about trees?' ([friendsoftheearth.uk/trees/whats-so-good-about-trees](http://friendsoftheearth.uk/trees/whats-so-good-about-trees)).

But more and more of us are living in cities away from trees, forests and nature. More than 50% of the world's population now live in urban areas, and this is expected to increase to 70% by 2050. This means that looking after our existing trees and woods and planting more trees in our cities and towns is more important than ever.

## Join the movement!

City of Trees is a movement aiming to re-invigorate Greater Manchester's landscape by restoring underused, unloved woodland and planting a tree for every person that lives in the City Region, within a generation. Their 3 main goals are to:

- plant 3 million trees, one for every person in Greater Manchester
- bring 2,000 hectares of unmanaged woodland back into use for the community
- help connect people to the trees and woods around them.

They do this by running different projects in Greater Manchester including tree planting and managing woodlands; creating urban orchards; school projects, and GreenStreets (planting street trees; greening grey streets).

## Trees we love: the Heritage Trees project

This was a four-year project to celebrate, record and protect our local tree heritage - the trees, woodlands, hedgerows and orchards which are part of the fabric of our towns and cities. The Heritage Trees map ([heritagetrees.org.uk/](http://heritagetrees.org.uk/)) lets you browse photographs and details of the trees, memorable woodlands, community orchards and people's stories about trees they love right across Greater Manchester.

## Become a Citizen Forester

City of Trees organise regular tree planting and woodland management sessions. You can volunteer to become a Citizen Forester and whether you give 1 day, 1 hour or 1 week you can help achieve the goal of planting a tree for every man, woman and child across Greater Manchester. Sessions are usually 4 - 5 hours and City of Trees provide all the tools and equipment and light refreshments are provided.

Find a City of Trees planting event near you.  
([www.cityoftrees.org.uk/events](http://www.cityoftrees.org.uk/events))

## OAK



If you're out and about in Greater Manchester, which trees are you most likely to spot? In the summer and autumn of 2018, local tree campaign City of Trees carried out a survey and estimated that Greater Manchester has a total of 11.3 million trees, which cover 15.7% of the region.<sup>1</sup> This is slightly more than the national average tree cover. They also found that one of the three commonest trees in Greater Manchester is the English oak, which is one of our longest-lived trees and supports the greatest number of insect species. This is also known as the 'pedunculate' oak, which means its acorns grow on stalks. The UK has another species of oak called the 'sessile' oak (no acorn stalks), but this is commoner in Scotland and Wales - one of these (in Liverpool) has been chosen as England and the UK's Tree of the Year for 2020.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.cityoftrees.org.uk/project/all-our-trees-i-tree-eco>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2019/oct/23/liverpools-1000-year-old-oak-is-englands-tree-of-the-year>

Trees of Greater Manchester



# Top Tips for Christmas Time

## Deck the halls with boughs of holly

Originally thought by pagans to bestow revellers with good luck, long life and protection from evil spirits; ivy, mistletoe, holly and pine naturally bring a touch of festive cheer into the home.

If you're picking your own it is important to be respectful of wildlife that depend on them. Never strip an entire plant of its leaves or berries (holly and mistletoe, while poisonous to humans, are valuable sources of winter food for birds) and try to tread lightly in surrounding areas as they may be sheltering other creatures.

For more information on responsible foraging practices check out the WildFoodUK Foraging Code ([www.wildfooduk.com/foraging-code](http://www.wildfooduk.com/foraging-code)) and the Wildlife and Countryside Act.

## Perfect Presents

Not buying unwanted Christmas gifts can amount to a saving of 80kg of carbon dioxide per person<sup>1</sup> – that's the weight equivalent of 123 Christmas puddings!

Bee saver kits, seed bombs, tree or habitat adoption, birdhouses and feeders, donations to animal protection or rescue organizations, indoor and outdoor plants, supporting a carbon project in their name, wildlife sponsorship packs etc. are all great gift options for nature lovers.

Buying local, second-hand or making your own are also excellent ways to give something unique to your loved ones. Just make sure to recycle your wrapping paper (or use fabric for a plush alternative).

## It's gonna be lit tonight...

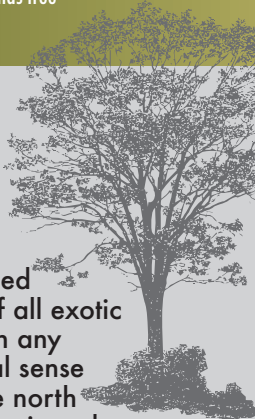
According to Wired magazine, switching to LEDs can "slash energy use by as much as 90%"<sup>2</sup>. Timers and solar powered lights also make a big difference. Any old or broken Christmas lights are classified as Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) and can be recycled at your local household waste recycling centre.

## SYCAMORE

Another of the three commonest trees identified by the City of Trees survey is the sycamore, famous for its spinning winged seeds or 'keys'. The sycamore is by far the most successful of all exotic trees in the UK, and it is in fact found over a wider area than any native species.<sup>1</sup> Here, the word 'exotic' is used in its technical sense – the sycamore is actually native as near as Belgium and the north of France. It will withstand strong winds and salt spray in the air and has therefore often been planted to screen farms in the Pennines and Scotland and as a windbreak on the coast. It is even resilient enough to survive on the Faroe Islands and in Iceland. Although it's not native to Great Britain, it attracts many species of aphids (and therefore their predators), and its flowers are pollinated by bees.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> <https://bit.ly/nativespecies>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/trees-woods-and-wildlife/british-trees/a-z-of-british-trees/sycamore/>



## Animal friendly

Food for thought – the turkey in the room. Households across the UK reportedly serve up approximately 10 million turkeys at Christmas. Supermarkets and health food shops are increasingly stocking meat-free alternatives – why not try a veggie or vegan centrepiece for your Christmas feast?

Be wary of live-animal shows at shopping or garden centres – Reindeer are sometimes transported and then held in small pens for many hours. Animal Aid conducted investigations in 2018 that unearthed evidence of numerous cases of neglect and stress. Instead, how about downloading the iNaturalist app and going for a walk – begin and collect your own wildlife record.

## Tree-cycling

According to Fresh Start Waste Services, 3/4 of UK Christmas trees (6 million) end up in landfill<sup>3</sup>, almost 10,000 tons of greenhouse gases needlessly released into the atmosphere each year. You can help to lower these numbers. Greater Manchester Councils also collect trees (may need chopping to trunks no thicker than a wrist) in the green food and garden bin, or take the larger trees to recycling centres for free<sup>4</sup>.

Potted trees (which you can then keep outside for the rest of the year – or plant when they get too big) and rental trees are also great green options.

<sup>1</sup> [york.ac.uk/news-and-events/news/2007/carbon-christmas](http://york.ac.uk/news-and-events/news/2007/carbon-christmas)

<sup>2</sup> [www.wired.co.uk/article/environmentally-friendly-christmas-climate-change](http://www.wired.co.uk/article/environmentally-friendly-christmas-climate-change)

<sup>3</sup> [www.fswaste.co.uk/2018/12/can-you-recycle-christmas-trees-real-artificial](http://www.fswaste.co.uk/2018/12/can-you-recycle-christmas-trees-real-artificial)

<sup>4</sup> [recycleforgreatermanchester.com/how-to-recycle-your-christmas-tree](http://recycleforgreatermanchester.com/how-to-recycle-your-christmas-tree)

# For Climate Resilience Garden like a Forest

'Forest Gardens in Boxes' with planting plan & info will be available at Hulme Community Garden Centre from 'Potato Day' on Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> Feb 2020.

A Forest Garden is modelled on woodland layers of trees, shrubs, herbs and groundcover, designed to grow fruits, nuts, vegetables, herbs and salad from mainly perennial and self-seeding plants that mimic a natural ecosystem. It can be beautiful, diverse, high-yield and low-maintenance.

Forest Gardening is 'Gardening with Nature', applying principles and patterns of nature and introducing plants to support each other, for varied purposes and to naturalise. A Forest Garden is designed for, then adapts to, or copes with, the light, water, winds and slopes of its site.

A Forest Garden could be established anywhere - from an orchard or semi-natural woodland, to a local park, domestic garden, alleyway or rooftop.

## The National Forest Garden Scheme

The National Forest Garden Scheme (NFGS) aims to connect as many people as possible to such inspiring spaces. This year they launched their 'Forest Garden in a Box' prototype in Manchester- enabling many people to forest garden via a simple set or 'guild' of plants. These living ecosystems will provide fruit, herbs and salad leaves and flowers and therapeutic/craft materials; and support subsoil networks, wildlife and communities.

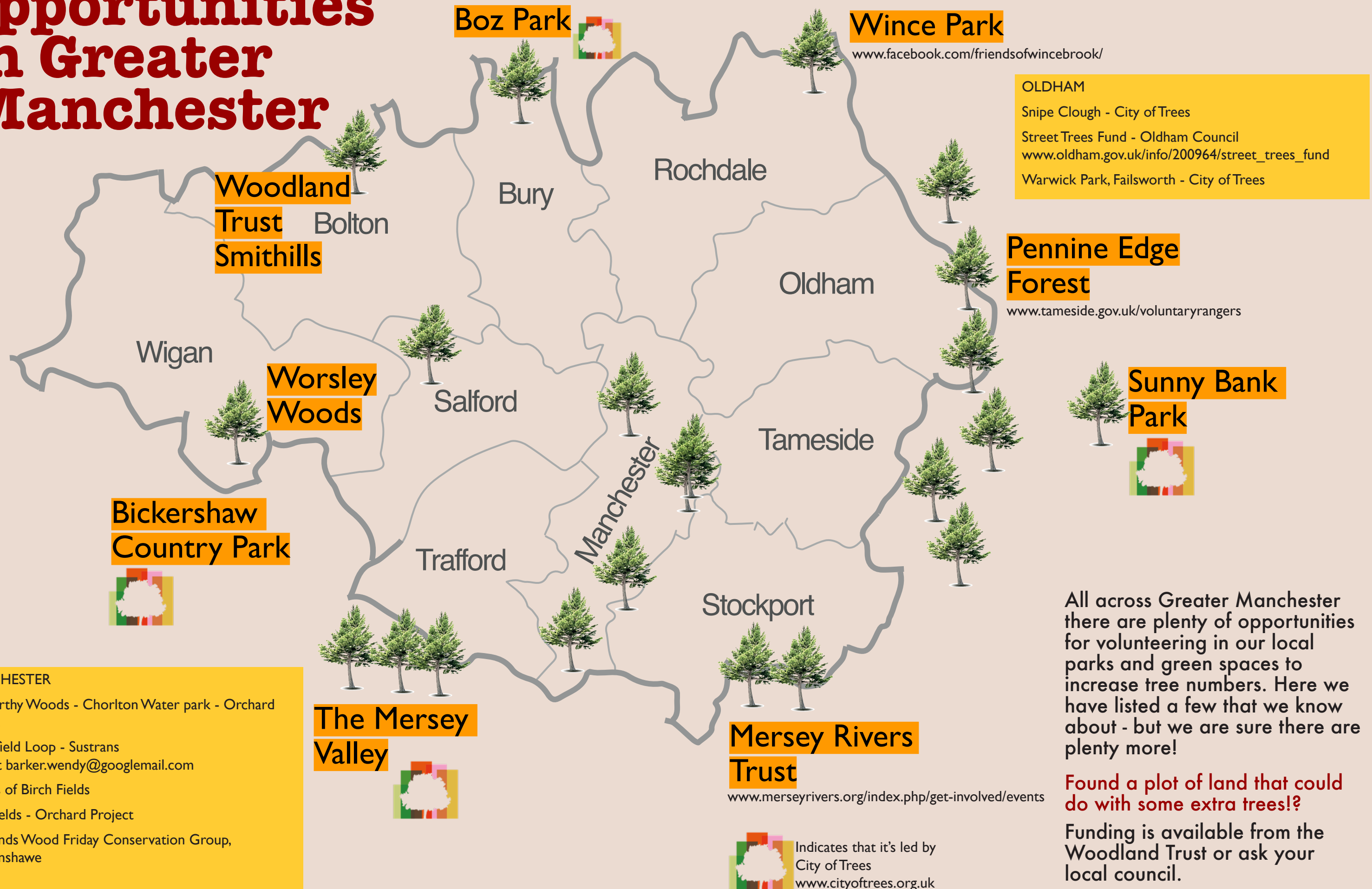
One 9-12m<sup>2</sup> 'box' could support an Apple tree, Gooseberry & Currant bushes; Strawberries; Chives; Comfrey, Fennel, Lavender, Lemon balm, Mallow & Mint; Chard, Marigold & Nasturtium seeds; and a Nitrogen fixer such as Clover or Bird's foot trefoil.

[nationalforestgardening.org](http://nationalforestgardening.org)





# Tree planting opportunities in Greater Manchester



All across Greater Manchester there are plenty of opportunities for volunteering in our local parks and green spaces to increase tree numbers. Here we have listed a few that we know about - but we are sure there are plenty more!

**Found a plot of land that could do with some extra trees!?**

Funding is available from the Woodland Trust or ask your local council.



# Catastrophic Biodiversity & Habitat Loss

## Taking Action in Greater Manchester

This year the United Nations report on biodiversity loss ([www.ipbes.net](http://www.ipbes.net)) painted an alarming picture of an 'accelerating' decline in global biodiversity, predicting that more than one million species of plants and animals are at risk of extinction within the coming decades. The report, the most comprehensive of its kind, placed land degradation at the top of the list as reasons for this sorry state of affairs.

In the UK many birds, including the Bullfinch, Kingfisher and Tawny owl, are at low numbers, as well as many bees and butterflies. Loss of these creatures and their habitats directly impacts humans, with the report estimating that US\$577 billion worth of annual global crops are at risk from pollinator loss and 100-300 million people face an increased risk of flooding and hurricanes because of loss of coastal habitats and protection. We need 'transformative' change to avoid these predictions becoming a reality.

Planting trees and managing those forests and green spaces we have is key to tackling this issue.

In Greater Manchester we need to look at our 'Bioregions'-catchment areas and brookside of the Bollin-Irk-Irwell rivers as they flow towards. Many urban water courses need to be allowed to de-culvert and naturalise. Trees that love to grow in wet places especially Alders and Willows (*Salix* species) will take up water there.

Forests, woodland and most mature trees of our parks, gardens and streets need protection, most especially ancient trees and woodland. Trees and shrubs including understorey and scrub habitats need protection and development, though some trees should be thinned for the benefit of others or to let in light or stop them becoming dangerous. Good woodland management does include coppicing and pollarding and regular cutting produces timber as well as keeping them safe for us.

## Trees and companion plants for Early Pollen & Nectar all year

Trees flowering in February-March are most important for pollinators, providing thousands of flowers in one place. Street and garden trees, parks and open green spaces make forage corridors, allowing flying insects an easier and more rewarding path through the metropolis.

Alders and Hazel are important for early pollen while Goat/Pussy Willow (*Salix Caprea*), Cornelian Cherry provide nectar as well as pollen. Alder, Hazel and Willow catkins are best in more sheltered spots where pollen stays on longer. Willows aren't so early but provide nectar even on cool March days and males provide pollen too.

Fruit tree blossom time is usually March to May, with Almond, Blackthorn & Myrobalan/Cherry plum earlier, then Damson, Gage, Plum and Pear mid-late March. Wild Cherry, Crab apple and Quince are all out before April-May and orchard Apple-blossom time, mid-April to late May.

For more, see [www.treesforcities.org/stories/how-to-make-an-urban-garden-bee-friendly](http://www.treesforcities.org/stories/how-to-make-an-urban-garden-bee-friendly)

Other trees are important for insects and therefore birds later in the year. These include:

- May - Hawthorns, Medlar, Rowan and Whitebeam.
- June - Linden/Lime blossom and exotics such as Robinia/Tulip Tree;
- July - Sweet chestnut
- October - Loquat and Strawberry tree

# Responsible Papers

Paper is one of the few truly sustainable materials and a great alternative to plastic. But within such a fast-moving manufacturing industry, and so many papers offering environmental benefits, how do you compare what's best?

As a sustainability-led designer, with a decade of experience, the best approach I use to reduce the impacts on climate change is to consider the environmental effects at every stage of the paper-making process. From sustainable forestry, reduction in water and energy use; to offsetting unavoidable carbon emissions and recycling waste.

To make a fair and validated comparison, I always look for the certified sustainable accreditations that have been awarded to each paper. As a rule of thumb, I tend to choose 3-5 papers that might be suitable, and then compare their environmental performance, which ultimately gives me the final selection. Here are my 5 tips on which certifications support this sustainable paper production process:

## 1. Support sustainable forestry

Over a single year a mature tree will take up approximately 22kg of CO<sub>2</sub> [1] and release enough oxygen back into the atmosphere to support two human beings [2].

In order to protect and promote responsible forestry, conserve biological diversity and protect old growth forests, it is important to buy from well-managed sources. Between 2005 and 2015, European forests grew by 44,160km<sup>2</sup>, that's an area larger than Switzerland and equivalent to over 1,500 football pitches of forest growth every day [3]. FSC and PEFC are the two most prominent forest certification schemes - preferencing FSC 100% to ensure the wood is completely from well-managed forests.

### What certifications to look for?

FSC 100% and PEFC

## 2. Reduce water pollution

Paper production is dependent on water, yet relatively little is consumed, with 93% being returned to the environment after suitably being treated [4].

A naturally occurring acid 'Lignin' is often present in wood pulp but if infused in water can have harmful effects on our ecosystem. Whilst chlorine is added to the paper-making process to give paper its white appearance. Choosing acid-free and totally chlorine-free (TCF) papers serves to reduce harmful by-products. Both of which address the problem of preserving documents, as the molecules in alkaline paper break down much slower and has a life expectancy of over 1,000 years [5].

### What certifications to look for?

Acid Free and Chlorine Free

## 3. Reduce energy & carbon

60% of the European pulp and paper industry's energy consumption already comes from renewable sources, making them the biggest single user of renewable energy in the EU [6].

Wind energy is emission free and completely renewable, producing little or no pollution. This explains why pulp, paper and print account for only 0.6% of European greenhouse gas emissions [7]. Furthermore the EU Ecolabel guarantees a very low environmental impact, with reduced consumption of electricity, low air and water emissions, improved waste recovery [8].

### What certifications to look for?

Wind-Powered and EU Ecolabel

## 4. Offset entire carbon footprint

Carbon neutral paper means the paper mill has measured their entire carbon footprint for each paper product, from electricity and manufacturing to transportation, and then balanced or offset through supporting impactful conservation projects, resulting in fully Co2 neutral products. To offset the unavoidable carbon emissions of your printed marketing materials, the World Land Trust, an international conservation charity, offers a Carbon Balancing programme [9].

So far, 169,500 tonnes of Co2 has been carbon balanced, which is the equivalent of taking 41,600 cars off the road for a year [10].

### What certifications to look for?

Carbon Neutral and Carbon Balancing

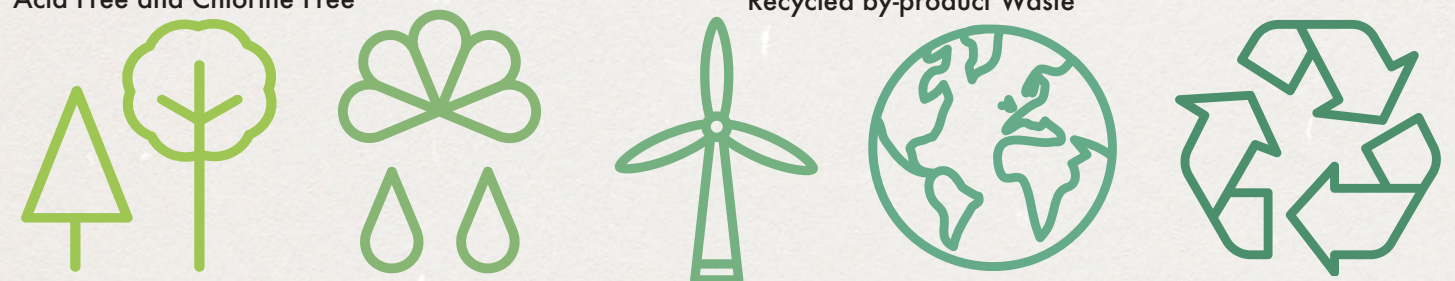
## 5. Reduce waste going to landfill

Paper for recycling is an essential raw material for the paper industry. In Europe, 47.8 million tonnes of it was used in 2016. 54% of the fibre used by Europe's paper producers comes from paper for recycling [11].

Recycled 100% Post-Consumer Waste (PCW) is considered the truest form of recycled fibre, as it has been recovered from consumer use. However it can be only used 5-7 times [12], and as it has been previously printed on, it needs to be de-inked. Therefore opt for recycled pulp that uses a Process Chlorine Free (PCF) method [13]. An alternative to paper waste, recycling the by-product residue from other manufacturing industries including leather, or from organic produce. These natural raw materials are saved from landfill and are still 100% recyclable and biodegradable.

### What certifications to look for?

Recycled 100% Post-Consumer Waste and Recycled by-product Waste





# Nature & Mental Health

According to mental health charity Mind, “every year 1 in 4 of us will experience a mental health problem”. The number of people accessing the Greater Manchester Mental Health service is starting to rise; the March 2019 Manchester Health and Wellbeing Report for Information forecast a delivery of “psychological treatment to 15,000 people” this year [1], accounting for “17% of those estimated to have a common mental health condition” (up from 14% in 2016-17).

Alongside traditional treatment methods the power of nature has long been viewed as a beneficial and healing force for good. An increasing number of studies are showing that the positive benefits of the great outdoors can be used to alleviate the symptoms of anxiety, depression, stress, fatigue and more.

Recent data analysing urban nature experiences has asserted that “taking at least twenty minutes out of your day to stroll or sit in a place that makes you feel in contact with nature will significantly lower your stress hormone levels.” [2a] [2b]

Trees play a significant part in this. They emit antimicrobial volatile organic compounds – chemicals – called phytoncides which can “reduce blood pressure... boost immune functioning” and can potentially prove “more effective than anti-depressants in lifting mood and ensuring emotional well-being” [3]. A Canadian study found that “the higher the density of trees in a

neighbourhood, the lower the incidence of heart and metabolic disease and the higher individuals’ mental and physical health perception.” [4] And the NHS Forest project cites evidence that even a glimpse of greenery can influence medical outcomes, “patients in hospital found that they recovered more quickly with a view of trees and nature from their windows” [5].

Other nature-based approaches to the treatment of mental health issues, like green wellbeing projects or ecotherapy (a practice that melds nature with psychotherapy – utilizing natural materials in the room, assigning outdoor homework or taking sessions outdoors, for example) are gaining in popularity. In her research paper, ‘It’s not just a walk in the park’, psychotherapist Joanne Hanrahan MSc highlights “the significance of nature as a resource to therapists, their clients and ultimately to the therapy process,” and notes “nature’s potential to enhance positive feelings. Terms such as ‘soothed’, ‘uplifted’, ‘rewired’ and ‘rejuvenated’ were regularly used.” [6]

Andy McGeeney, ecotherapist and author of ‘With Nature in Mind’, makes an important point though, when he states that “ecotherapy is for all of us – not just the diagnosed... too many of us are too often mentally distressed, and we need to do more to improve our lives.” [7]

[Please follow hyperlinks in reference numbers for sources.]

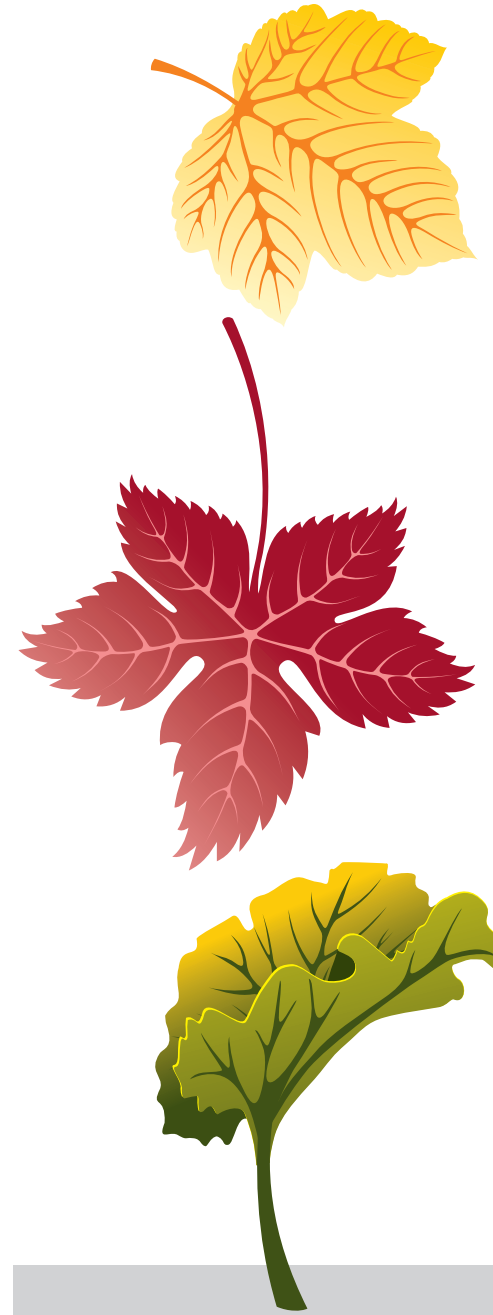
## Need advice or support?

- Greater Manchester Mental Health [www.gmmh.nhs.uk/services](http://www.gmmh.nhs.uk/services)
- Manchester Mind [www.manchestermind.org/our-services/](http://www.manchestermind.org/our-services/)
- Mental Health Foundation [www.mentalhealth.org.uk/your-mental-health/getting-help](http://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/your-mental-health/getting-help)

## So what can we do? How can we interact with nature to improve our mental health?

- Explore your local area. Find a place or a route that you enjoy and take slow, steady breaths as you walk. Take some photos – create a visual diary that you can keep and look back at. There are also a range of nature-based apps that can help you learn to identify trees, plants, birds and bees on your travels.
- Join with like-minded people. Volunteering – looking after a communal garden space, litter picking or joining a conservation group are some great ways to get a regular dose of nature while working towards a common goal.
- Bring nature indoors. Houseplants can help improve your mood and reduce stress levels. They also improve air quality and reduce feelings of fatigue.
- Help Friends of the Earth protect and campaign for more trees and green spaces in Manchester.

# What Can You Do?



## Help wildlife wait out the winter.

- Bacon rind, grated cheese, grain mix, nuts and raisins are nutritious sources of fat and will help keep birds warm as the temperature drops.
- For other creatures: before lighting please check bonfires for sheltering or hibernating animals, melt a drinking hole through pond ice or leave a shallow dish of water at ground level, create bug shelters and leave healthy or hollow-stemmed plants unpruned for overwintering insects (<https://www.rhs.org.uk/advice/profile?pid=382>).
- Help Bees this Christmas with our Friends of the Earth festive Bee Saver Kit ([friendsoftheearth.uk/bees/help-bees-christmas-friends-earths-festive-bee-saver-kit](http://friendsoftheearth.uk/bees/help-bees-christmas-friends-earths-festive-bee-saver-kit))

## Join the Big Climate Fightback – plant a tree on Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> November.

The Woodland Trust are trying to get 1 million people to pledge to plant a tree on Saturday November 30<sup>th</sup>. Can’t make it? Tree planting is best done October to April so many other organisations and local community groups will be planting throughout the season – keep an eye on our FoE events calendar ([www.manchesterfoe.org.uk/events/](http://www.manchesterfoe.org.uk/events/)) for planting activities near you. Just an hour of your time can help improve green spaces for wildlife and users.

## Add your voice to Friends of the Earth nature campaigns and petitions.

Sign Friends of the Earth’s petition calling on the UK Government to double the UK’s tree cover by 2045 to tackle the climate emergency: [act.friendsoftheearth.uk/petition/tell-uk-government-double-tree-cover](http://act.friendsoftheearth.uk/petition/tell-uk-government-double-tree-cover)

## HAWTHORN

The third of Greater Manchester’s three commonest trees is the hawthorn. This has dense masses of white flowers in the late spring and dark red berries (haws) in the autumn – these often remain on the tree in the winter and are valuable food for birds such as thrushes. Haws have also been used to make jam and syrup. Hawthorns are native to both the UK and mainland Europe and are particularly common in hedgerows, which are traditionally constructed and maintained by hedge-laying. This involves cutting part of the way through the stem of a young hawthorn tree so that the upper part of the stem can be bent over and woven in between stakes placed in the ground, which gives a dense, impassable network of upright stems. You can see examples of hedge-laying in the Mersey Valley near Chorlton Ees<sup>1</sup> and Sale Water Park.

<sup>1</sup> <https://bit.ly/chorltonees>

# BIKE FRI DAY .ORG



## SOCIAL RIDE & COFFEE

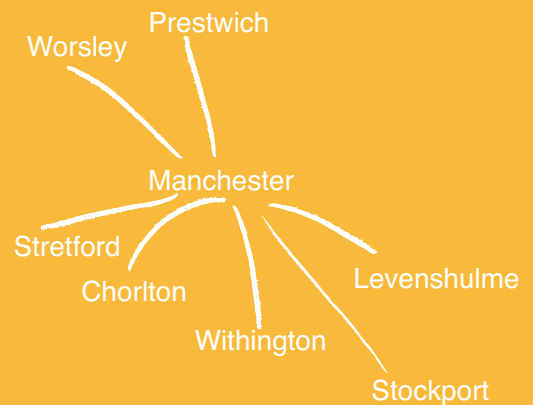
Last Friday of each month, from  
around Greater Manchester.

On the last Friday of each  
month\*, join others cycling  
from around Greater  
Manchester and meet for  
breakfast before work.

We ride at a moderate pace  
& have experienced guides.

All welcome. Bring a bike.

\* Except December (check website for monthly details)



Manchester Friends of the Earth is an award-winning environmental group creatively campaigning on local, national and international issues. We are fuelled by volunteer energy and funded by membership subscriptions and donations.

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