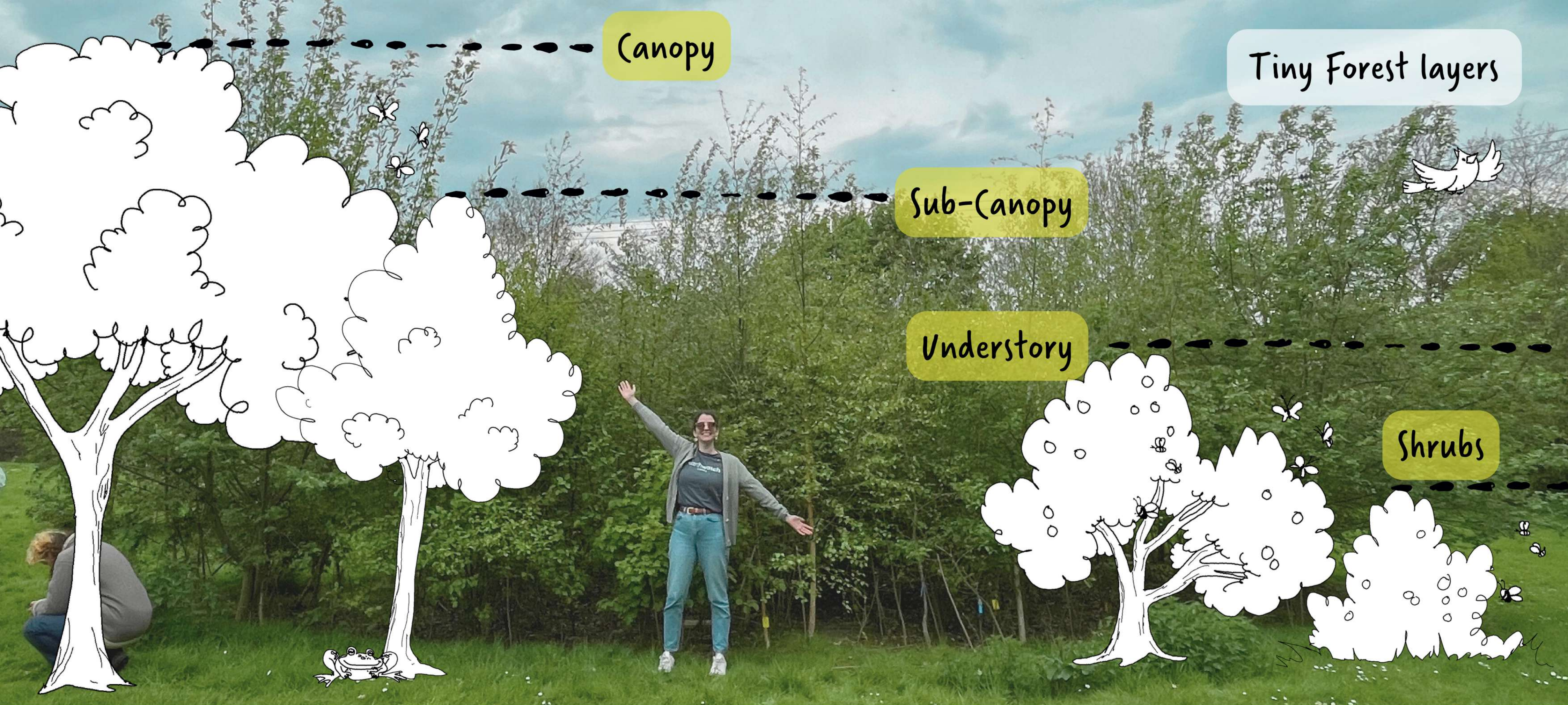


tinyforest

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EUROPE

Tree Keeper Starter Pack

A guide to looking after your local Tiny Forest and making the most of your volunteering journey as a Tiny Forest Tree Keeper.



What is a Tiny Forest?

A Tiny Forest is a dense, fast-growing native woodland, about the size of a tennis court. The forests are not only great homes for butterflies, birds, bees and other wildlife but also a place for people to connect with and learn about nature.

Tiny Forests mimic a traditional forest but in a small urban space. To succeed in such harsh conditions, Tiny Forests have a good mix of native trees and shrubs evenly distributed across four layers of the forest, which, over time, will create a resilient wildlife-rich environment.

Tiny Forest fun facts

- A Tiny Forest has 600 trees and shrubs representing about 15-25 native plant species.
- Each Tiny Forest is unique! Every forest is custom designed for the soil and site condition.
- It can attract over 500 species of animals and plants in the first three years of its growth!
- Tiny Forests are planted based on the work of the Japanese botanist Dr Akira Miyawaki.



Looking after your Tiny Forest

Looking after your Tiny Forest can be challenging but rewarding, and we're lucky to have passionate volunteers like yourself to help with the task. Our Tiny Forest volunteers are called Tree Keepers. This is a very flexible and independent volunteering role where you can plan what activities you want to do and how often you do them, either on your own or along with your fellow Tree Keepers.

What are the different ways that Tree Keepers can get involved?

The Tree Keeper role can be broadly divided into three branches: maintenance, citizen science and community engagement. These are neither strict nor compulsory categories and you can carry out the activities that interest you the most, based on the amount of time you want to dedicate.





Tiny Forest Maintenance

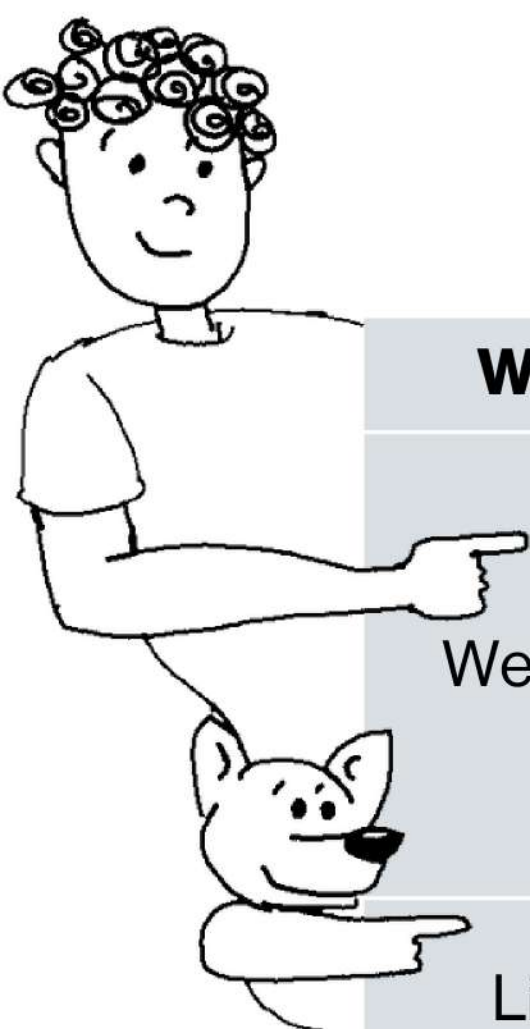
Weeding | Litter picking | Reporting vandalism | Extreme weather | Sharing pictures

Tiny Forests are designed to be self-maintaining. However, just like babies or puppies, the trees are most vulnerable in the first few years of their growth and need a bit of a helping hand and a small amount of maintenance. These actions include weeding, litter-picking, inspecting individual trees, mulch layer and fence/gate/benches.

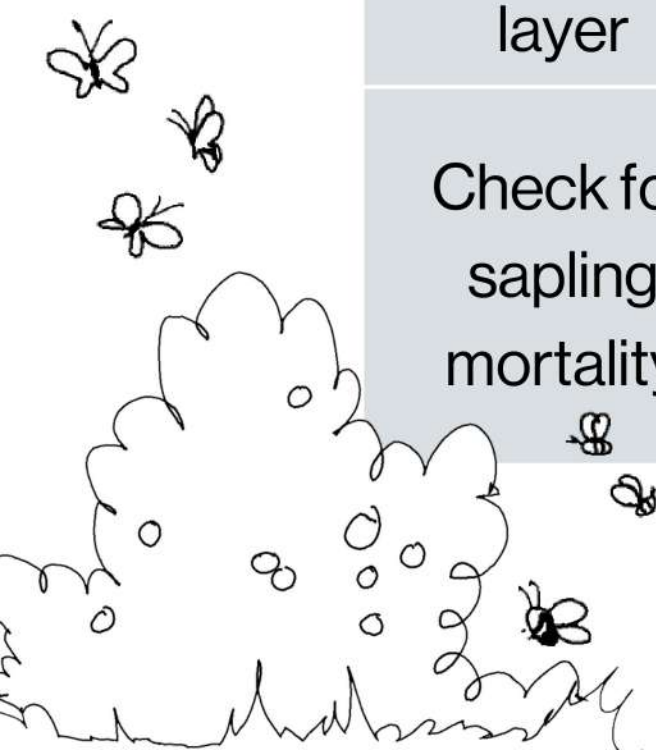
For the first 2-3 years of their development, the young trees can benefit from regular weeding as it ensures they get more nutrients, light and water. This is the most critical task you can do to help your Tiny Forest thrive. It can also be the most challenging, according to our older Tree Keepers it's best (and most fun) to do it in a group/ with a friend. However, by the time your Tiny Forest is about three years old, it will be well-established, the tree canopies will close and there won't be any need for weeding.

The other activities that you can help with is litter picking, and whenever you can, simply keeping an eye on your forest. Let us know if it is under threat from extreme weather, pests or antisocial behaviour. Finally, we would love to see pictures of you and your Tiny Forest so please do keep them coming! You can post the pictures on the [Tree Keeper Facebook](#) group or [upload securely](#) on our website.

Tiny Forest Maintenance: Deep Dive



What	Why	When	Action
Weeding	Weeds can compete with saplings for nutrients and water. Some 'weeds' can be beneficial though particularly if they are flowering, it is worth leaving these be as long as they are in flower.	Check once a fortnight during spring and summer.	Remove competitive weeds, chop or tear into pieces and leave as part of mulch layer. You can watch our weeding video guide for more tips.
Litter picking	Litter is a form of pollution, being a danger to wildlife as well as unsightly. Removing litter will help to discourage future occurrences.	Check once a fortnight to monthly throughout the year.	Pick litter in a safe manner, preferably as and when you visit so that it is not left for long periods.
Check for signs of drought	Saplings are sensitive to extreme conditions especially after a period of severe drought.	Check once a fortnight during spring and summer.	Check plants for signs of water stress (yellowed, wilting or scorched leaves), also check beneath the mulch layer to see if the soil is moist. Only water when absolutely necessary. If you think watering is required, contact Earthwatch*, we can help organise watering with the landowner.
Check structures	This includes the fence, gate, benches and information sign, as part of maintaining the area as a whole. These could be affected by adverse weather or vandalism.	Check monthly throughout the year.	Report any damages to Earthwatch*.
Check the condition of the mulch layer	The mulch layer keeps weeds at bay, protects the soil from UV until the canopy closes, and helps retain soil moisture.	Check monthly throughout the year.	Redistribution of the mulch layer can help maintain even coverage. A restock might be needed to ensure an even thick layer of mulch is maintained across the site for the first two years. If you think this is required, contact Earthwatch*.
Check for sapling mortality	Low level sapling mortality is expected. But in high quantities an adjustment in maintenance activity might be needed.	Check monthly throughout the year.	Look for trees with no new growth. Scratch the bark of the sapling with a fingernail, if it is green beneath, the sapling is still alive. If there is a large amount of mortality, report this to Earthwatch*.



*contact Earthwatch via email tinyforest@earthwatch.org.uk



Citizen Science

Biodiversity | Carbon Storage | Flood Management | Thermal Comfort

Your Tiny Forest is a living laboratory and a part of a wonderful network of hundreds of Tiny Forests all around the UK. With your help, we want to monitor and understand the environmental and social benefits that Tiny Forests provide.

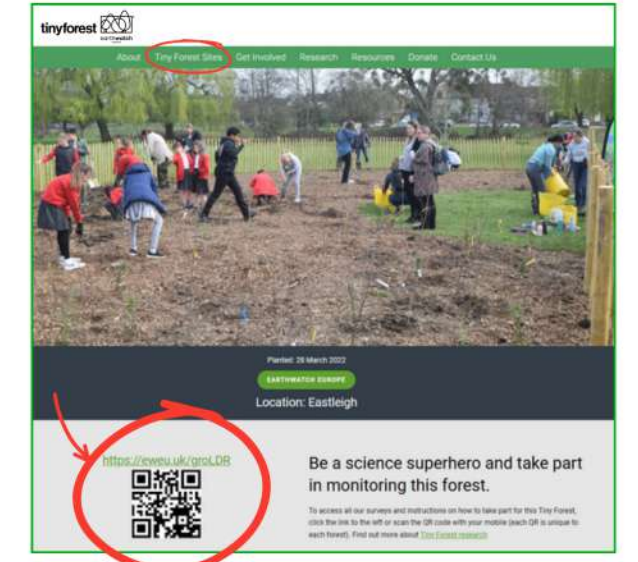
There are four research topics we would like your help measuring: Biodiversity, Carbon Storage, Flood Management and Thermal Comfort. This is done via fun activities like measuring trees, counting butterflies and bugs, and getting your hands muddy for the soil survey. All the data you collect will be directly used by our scientists and you in turn will become a citizen scientist! There is no age limit, and these fun surveys can be carried out by children and adults of all ages. We hold [regular trainings](#), have [survey guides](#) on our website, and will provide equipment wherever necessary to support you. The surveys take anywhere between 10 to 30 minutes to complete and are amazing way to mindfully connect with nature. Visit your Tiny Forest page on our website, click on the link or scan the QR code to start the survey.

The results of the data you collect will be used to inform policy, such as the [Green Instructure Framework](#), and guide other agencies on how to use Miyawaki forests in urban areas to provide maximum ecological and social benefits.

Tiny Forest Citizen Science: Deep Dive

There are a lot of health and wellbeing benefits of spending time in nature. Carrying out these citizens science surveys not only creates mindful opportunities to connect with nature, but provides ways of taking action for nature, building your science skills and knowledge, and participating in international research by collecting vital information that is used by our scientists to evaluate social and environmental benefits of such nature-based intervention in urban places.

To get started with the surveys, visit the [Tiny Forest Sites](#) on our website, click on your Tiny Forest, scroll down and click on the link or scan the QR code.



Biodiversity

Tiny Forests provide rich habitats that act as a refuge for wildlife within urban areas. In this survey, we want you to count the butterflies and bugs in your Tiny Forest. You will need your phone (with internet) or a printout of the [field sheets](#) and 15 minutes. It's that simple. Visit the [biodiversity survey](#) page on our website for more information and training videos.



Carbon Storage

Trees capture carbon and store it in their trunks. In this survey, we want to learn how much carbon is stored by measuring the height and diameter of the tagged trees in your Tiny Forest. You will need a ruler, a tape measure and your phone (with internet) or a printout of the [field sheets](#). Visit the [carbon survey](#) page on our website for the training videos.



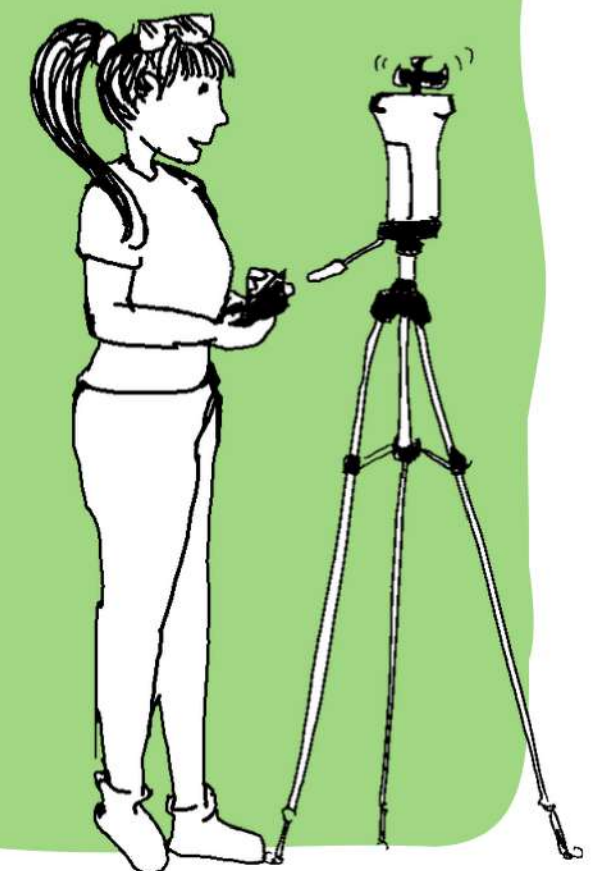
Flood Management

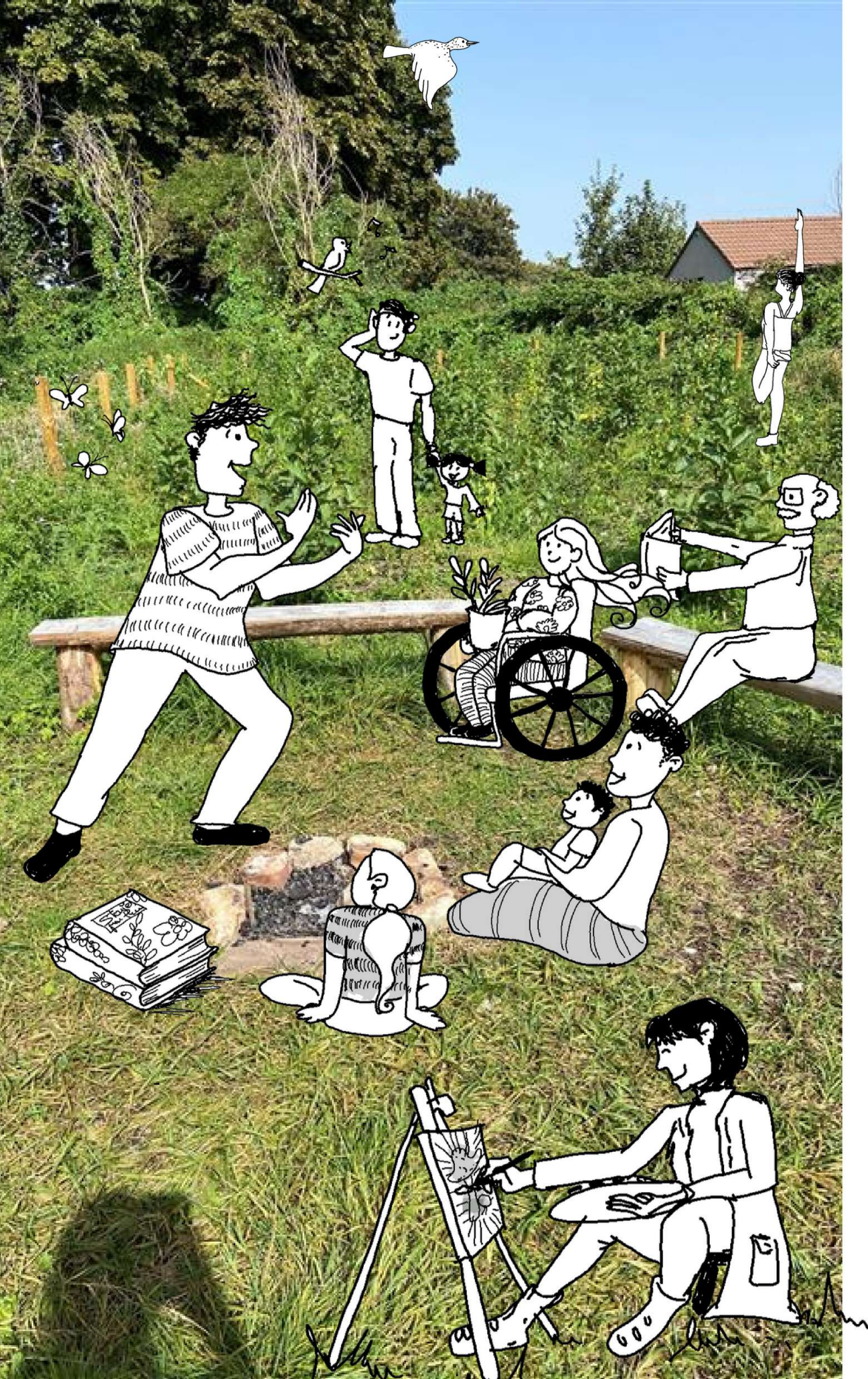
All urban trees help with preventing floods. In this survey we get a little muddy to measure how much your Tiny Forest helps prevent flooding. You will need some special equipment to carry out this survey, so get in touch with us and we will be happy to send it over.



Thermal Comfort

Have you experienced how trees help cool the environment around them? In this survey we want to measure the difference in thermal conditions, inside and outside your Tiny Forest. You will need a special equipment to carry out this survey, so get in touch with us and we will be happy to send it over.





Community engagement

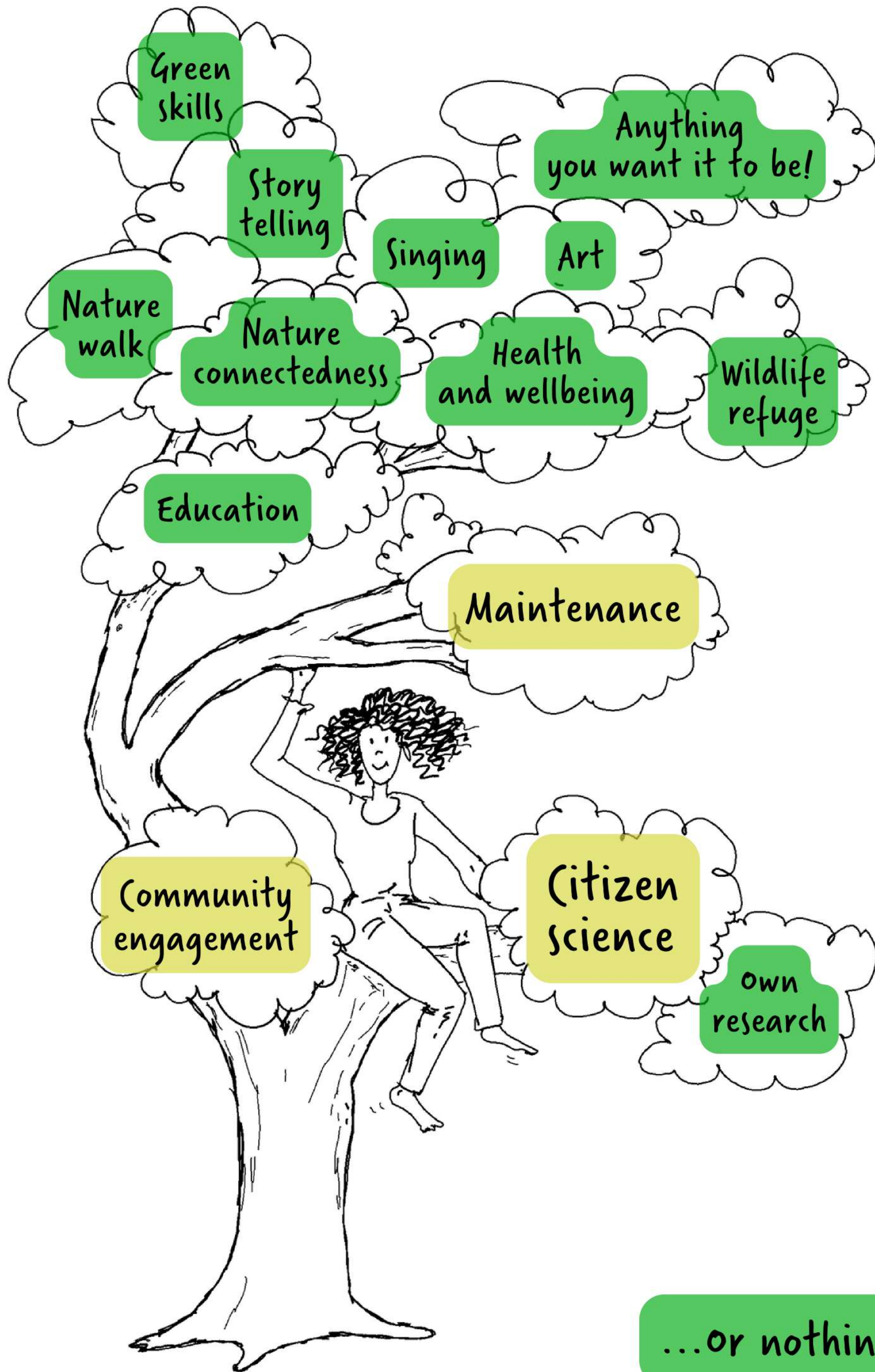
Engage community | Organise events | Invite friends and family | Use as venue | Let your imagination run wild!

Tiny Forests are lovely natural spaces for the whole community to enjoy. Use it as a venue to relax after a long day, meet your friends, or host family picnics. Tiny Forests are also a great space to engage your wider community to build stronger connection to each other and nature. You could organise a story-telling event, an outdoor art session, a pollinator picnic, or sing folk songs, the sky is the limit!

How about hosting a 'community care day' and weed your Tiny Forest with your neighbours and friends? Or a 'science day' and invite your local community to measure trees, and engage children to count the creepy-crawlies under the biodiversity tiles!

If you are an educator, a home-schooling parent, or someone who enjoys engaging children and young people with nature and learning, you could use your Tiny Forest as an outdoor classroom and use the [learning resources](#) developed by our education team to complement classroom education and promote nature connection.

Big or small, we would love to see you use and enjoy your Tiny Forest with your local community and make it your own. If you need any support with your event, or want to share stories and pictures of your event, email the Tiny Forest team at tinyforest@earthwatch.org.uk



What are the different ways that Tree Keepers can get involved?

Maintaining your Tiny Forest, citizen science and community engagement are just broad outlines on how you can support your local community, natural environment and wildlife, but it is really up to you to plot the journey you want to take with your Tiny Forest.

None of these activities are compulsory. There is no fixed time commitment needed. These are just opportunities for you to help your local Tiny Forest thrive, especially in their younger stages, help our scientists with research, and take nature-positive action.

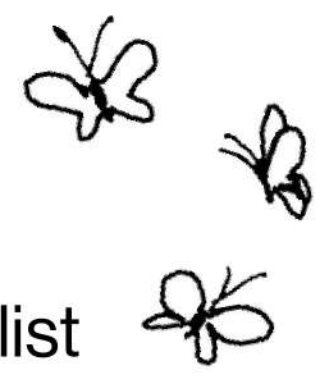
But it can be anything you want it to be. Tell us how you wish to engage with your local Tiny Forest, and we will support you! Email us at tinyforest@earthwatch.org.uk





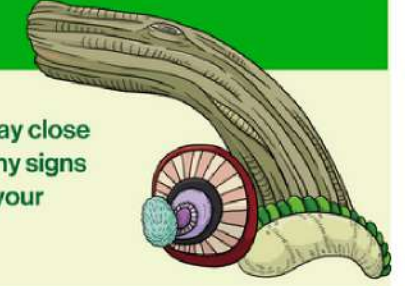




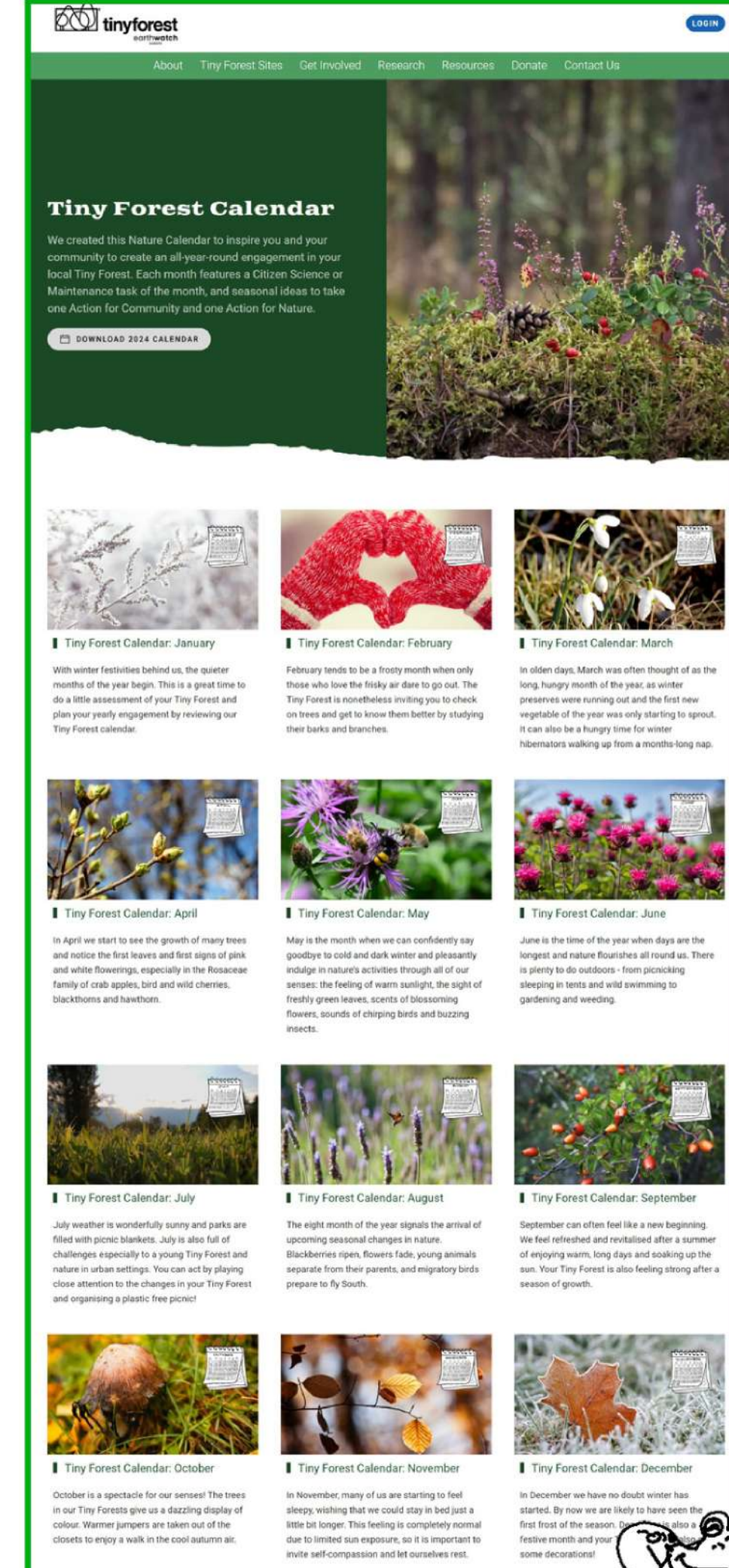
...or nothing. Especially nothing, when in the company of nature and trees!

Tiny Forest calendar and monthly guide

We have created the Tiny Forest calendar and monthly guide to help you see when to do activities in your Tiny Forest. You will find a list of the special days you can celebrate. Learn when to carry out the different citizen science surveys, and find out about upcoming webinars. Be inspired to take one simple action every month to help your Tiny Forest, nature and your community. These guides are here to provide ideas, and to ignite your imagination. Feel free to also come up with your own! Ultimately, this is now your Tiny Forest and your volunteer role. Download the [2024 Tiny Forest calendar](#) and view the [monthly guide](#).



JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH	APRIL	National days and weeks you can celebrate in your Tiny Forest
<p>Chase the winter blues in the company of our flying friends. How about birdwatching (and listening!) in your Tiny Forest?</p> 	<p>This Valentine's Day, show your love for nature and feel the love back! Visit your Tiny Forest with your date, family or friends.</p> 	<p>On International Women's Day, encourage more women, especially from BAME backgrounds, to engage in Tiny Forest citizen science.</p>	<p>Gather your community and take action for Earth Day. Or make a collective impact of One Million Acts of Science during Citizen Science Month this April!</p>	<p>JANUARY 25 Dec - 5 Jan: 12 Days Wild 8 Jan - 19 Feb: RSPB Big Schools Birdwatch 26-28 Jan: RSPB Big Garden Birdwatch</p> <p>FEBRUARY 5-11 Feb: Children's Mental Health Week 11 Feb: International Day of Women & Girls in Science 19 Feb: Big Schools Birdwatch deadline</p> <p>MARCH 3 Mar: World Wildlife Day 20 Mar: World Rewilding Day 21 Mar: International Day of Forests</p> <p>APRIL 1-30 Apr: Citizen Science Month 7 Apr: World Health Day 22 Apr: Earth Day</p> <p>MAY 1-31 May: No Mow May 23 May: Outdoor Classroom Day 20 May: World Bee Day 22 May: World Biodiversity Day</p> <p>JUNE 1-30 Jun: 30 Days Wild 5 Jun: World Environment Day 8-16 Jun: Great Big Green Week 24-30 Jun: National Insect Week</p> <p>JULY 1-31 Jul: Plastic Free July 12 Jul-4 Aug: Big Butterfly Count 20-28 Jul: National Moth Week 28 Jul: World Nature Conservation Day</p> <p>AUGUST 4 Aug: Big Butterfly Count deadline 14 Aug: World Lizard Day 17 Aug: World Honey Bee Day</p> <p>SEPTEMBER 23 Sep - 23 Oct: Seed Gathering Season 23-29 Sept: FSC Forest Week 26 Sep: World Environmental Health Day</p> <p>OCTOBER 1-31 Oct: Squirrel Awareness Month, Bat Appreciation Month 5 Oct: UK Fungus Day 6-12 Oct: Mental Health Awareness Week 21 Oct: World Earthworm Day</p> <p>NOVEMBER 7 Nov: Outdoor Classroom Day 26 Nov-4 Dec: National Tree Week</p> <p>DECEMBER 5 Dec: World Soil Day 7 Dec: Tree Dressing Day 25 Dec-5 Jan: 12 Days Wild</p> 
<p>ACTIONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tiny Forest: check safety & accessibility Nature: birdwatching, make nest boxes Community: wellbeing check (invite your neighbours or family for a walk) 	<p>ACTIONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tiny Forest: loosen tight tree tags Nature: carry out carbon survey Community: reflect on the benefits of nature connectedness 	<p>ACTIONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tiny Forest: do ground dweller survey Nature: think about helping hedgehogs Community: share citizen science opportunities in Tiny Forest 	<p>ACTIONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tiny Forest: catch-up carbon survey Nature: add water plants to a pond Community: raise awareness for the planet on Earth Day 	
<p>WEBINAR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> State of Nature Report Breakdown Recurring webinars: Tree Keeper Induction - 2nd Monday of every month (5pm-6pm) Tree Keeper Network Chat - 4th Monday of every month (5pm-6pm) 	<p>WEBINAR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring Season Research Wrap Up 	<p>WEBINAR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tiny Forest Monitoring - Deep Dive 	<p>WEBINAR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Biodiversity Survey Training 	
MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUGUST	
<p>Encourage people to record pollinators and butterflies in your Tiny Forest during Biodiversity Week 18 - 26 May.</p> 	<p>Seek inspiration from Sweden (Midsommer) and make a wreath of flowers, walk barefoot, play games, dance, and eat early summer treats in your Tiny Forest!</p>	<p>This month, pay close attention to any signs of drought in your Tiny Forest.</p> 	<p>August is when your Tiny Forest is dense and green. This means an explosion of biodiversity! Why not do another pollinator survey?</p>	
<p>ACTIONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tiny Forest: conduct biodiversity survey Nature: learn about insects Community: improve mental wellbeing by tapping into powers of nature 	<p>ACTIONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tiny Forest: check mulch layer Nature: schedule regular weeding in younger Tiny Forests Community: summer solstice party 	<p>ACTIONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tiny Forest: check for signs of drought and water the trees if necessary Nature: conduct flood mitigation survey Community: plastic-free morning tea party 	<p>ACTIONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tiny Forest: conduct a butterfly count Nature: give 'mothing' a try Community: organise a storytelling session in your Tiny Forest 	
<p>WEBINAR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Behaviour of Buzzing Bees Recurring webinars: Tree Keeper Induction - 2nd Monday of every month (5pm-6pm) Tree Keeper Network Chat - 4th Monday of every month (5pm-6pm) 	<p>WEBINAR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Biodiversity Week Research Wrap up 	<p>WEBINAR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tiny Forest Scientists: Ask Us Anything 	<p>WEBINAR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carbon Week Training 	
SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER	
<p>It is time to check final numbers – how much have the trees grown over the summer? Measure trees during Carbon Week 21-29 September.</p> 	<p>October is a spectacle for our senses! Enjoy the show of colours in your Tiny Forest – remember to let the leaves stay on the ground as they provide habitat and add nutrition to the soil.</p>	<p>As things slow down for the winter, now is a good time to practice self kindness. Visit your Tiny Forest, alone or with your friends, and reflect on what kindness means in our lives.</p>	<p>December is a festive month! Celebrate Tree Dressing Day or Hindu tradition of Raksha Bandhan, Japanese tanzaku, Christmas tree decorating, or even 'yarn bombing'!</p> 	
<p>ACTIONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tiny Forest: conduct carbon storage survey Nature: loosen tight tree tags Community: reach out to your local school and conduct a carbon survey with them 	<p>ACTIONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tiny Forest: admire the autumn colours Nature: talk to your council & install a pond Community: be inspired by your Tiny Forest and get arty! 	<p>ACTIONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tiny Forest: conduct flood mitigation survey and compare your findings from July Nature: build a hedgehog house Community: encourage self-kindness 	<p>ACTIONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tiny Forest: forage for blackthorn berries Nature: take part in 12 Days Wild Community: celebrate trees by tree dressing with your community 	
<p>WEBINAR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Autumn Activities in Tiny Forest Recurring webinars: Tree Keeper Induction - 2nd Monday of every month (5pm-6pm) Tree Keeper Network Chat - 4th Monday of every month (5pm-6pm) 	<p>WEBINAR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carbon Week Research Wrap up 	<p>WEBINAR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flood Mitigation & Thermal Comfort Training 		



The screenshot shows the Tiny Forest website interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with links for 'About', 'Tiny Forest Sites', 'Get Involved', 'Research', 'Resources', 'Donate', and 'Contact Us'. The main content area features a large header for 'Tiny Forest Calendar' with a sub-header 'We created this Nature Calendar to inspire you and your community to create an all-year-round engagement in your local Tiny Forest. Each month features a Citizen Science or Maintenance task of the month, and seasonal ideas to take one Action for Community and one Action for Nature.' Below this, there are several smaller sections for each month, each with a representative image and a brief description of the month's theme and activities. For example, January is about birdwatching, February is about Valentine's Day and carbon surveys, and December is about festive tree dressing. At the bottom right of the screenshot, there's a '2024 tinyforest' logo and a 'Powered by earthwatch' logo.



Tree Keeper Resources

We have a whole host of free resources and training webinars for you!

- Tiny Forest website: Go to tinyforest.earthwatch.org.uk and [Resources](#) to find all Tree Keeper resources, monitoring guides, field sheets, educational resources to engage children and more.
- Under [Tree Keeper Resources](#), find the link to the YouTube [Tree Keeper Playlist](#), a growing library of training recordings.
- Check out the [Get Involved](#) section of the Tiny Forest website to access the upcoming events, the monthly guide and 2024 calendar.
- Tree Keeper Facebook Group: join the private Facebook group www.facebook.com/groups/tinyforest to meet other Tree Keepers, post photos, get updates and more.
- Email us at tinyforest@earthwatch.org.uk for any questions, concerns and more information.

The screenshot shows the 'Resources' page on the Tiny Forest website. The navigation menu includes 'About', 'Tiny Forest Sites', 'Get Involved', 'Research', 'Resources', 'Donate', and 'Contact'. The 'Resources' link is circled in green, with a cartoon character pointing to it. Below the navigation is a large image of a group of people planting trees in a field. The main heading is 'Tiny Forest Resources' with a sub-heading: 'Below you will find a range of Tiny Forest resources including monitoring guides, fun activities to do with kids and much more.' There are four main resource categories: 'Monitoring Survey Guides', 'Monitoring Data Sheets', 'Educational Resources', and 'Tree Keeper Resources'. Below these are 'Monitoring reports and publications' and 'ECOSOC Resources'. A 'Survey Guides' section lists various guides with 'DOWNLOAD' buttons. A 'Get Involved' section features a 'Tree Keepers' video player and several event cards like 'Become a Tree Keeper', 'Tiny Forest Calendar', 'Become a Citizen Scientist', 'Tiny Forest for Schools', and 'Support the Movement'.

The screenshot shows a YouTube playlist titled 'Tree Keepers' by Earthwatch Europe. The playlist contains seven videos: 'Tree Keepers' (27 videos, 324 views), 'Butterfly Time Count Survey' (47:10), 'Butterfly Species List Survey' (1:37), 'Pollinator Time Count Survey' (1:03), 'Ground Dweller Survey' (1:46), 'Ground Dweller Survey Wildlife ID guide' (1:38), and 'Tiny Forest Weeding Webinar - 15/06/2023' (27:02). A cartoon character is pointing to the video list.

The screenshot shows the Facebook group page for 'Tiny Forest Tree Keepers'. The page includes a cover photo of a vibrant forest scene, a bio, and a list of members. The group is active with various posts and photos of people participating in tree-keeping activities.

The screenshot shows the 'Tiny Forest Calendar' page. It features a grid of monthly guides for January, February, and March, each with a corresponding photo of a tree or plant. The page also includes a bio and a list of members.



Earthwatch Europe is an environmental charity with science at its heart. Together, we work to create a world where we live in balance with nature.

We help communities to protect the nature around them. We build meaningful nature connections and give people the tools they need to fight for our planet.

Working alongside communities and organisations, we build an understanding and a love of nature, and help everyone to protect the natural world. Guided by science and powered by people, we create change through connection.

People are the heart of everything we do. From the classroom to the boardroom and the field to the laboratory, we bring everyone together with the shared goal to protect our planet. We work where we can have the most impact, creating knowledge and inspiring action. We fight for our fragile planet with passion and with science – with our hearts and our minds.

For more information, visit earthwatch.org.uk



Illustrations by Divya Kumar, Community Engagement Manager, Earthwatch Europe.

The style and illustrations in this booklet were inspired by the [Nature and me](#) booklet created by National Trust and illustrated by Susie Brooks @susiebrooks.net