

Tree Walks

An idea for leaders of any Section to build knowledge about trees.

The intention of a Tree Walk is to foster better understanding of trees through *activity, journey, story and looking*. The first one I did in Rothamsted (*The Oak is likely to win*) is just one way to construct a Tree Walk: there are dozens of ways to design a Tree Walk adaptable to practically any safe location where there are trees.

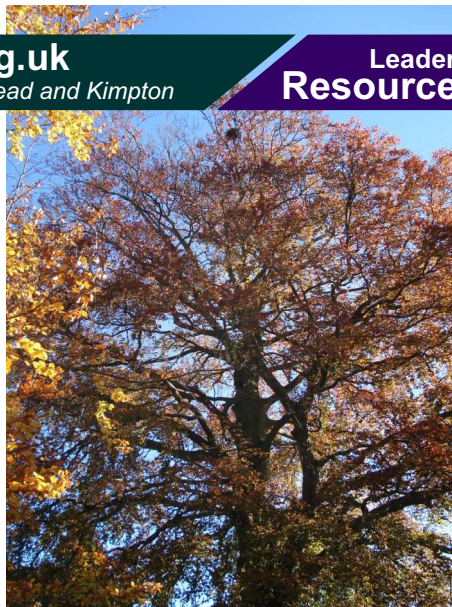
The idea is to engage the scouts in a tree-centric hour and range over any topic that bears on trees. Content may include uses for the tree, history, folk lore, ecology, crafts, biology, forestry, urban value, recognition, backwoodsmanship, and so on. If it engages the scouts and it is about trees, it qualifies.

As a principle of any Tree Walk, the scouts should spend some time doing something practical. For instance, estimating the height and weight of a tree, extracting tannin from acorns, or making dye from elderberry. Before and after the activity (or activities), it is mostly walking and talking and so research is essential to be interesting.

Rothamsted Park, the Common, the Southdown ponds, Batford and the town have a wide variety of trees and all present opportunities for activity. What matters on a Tree Walk is that the scouts engage: if it turns into pure recreation, it isn't a tree walk.

Be serious, be inventive, work to fascinate the scouts.

Rv July 2014



Possible ideas for a Tree Walk:

- * Discuss the structure of a tree where tree surgeons have left sliced trunks to study.
- * The life supported by oak trees.
- * Holly and the elephants that grazed England
- * Bracket fungus and the old ways of carrying fire
- * Willows and cricket bats
- * Willow and Hazel for baskets
- * Disease threats of Ash, Beech and Chestnut
- * A journey of oaks: Common English, Turkey, Red, Scarlet (perhaps Pin), Holm.
- * Acorn coffee and flour: how to remove the tannin. Why the tannin is there. Man's use for it.
- * Rope and sandals from lime bark. Nettle fibre as an illustration.
- * Discuss the roots of a tree, especially where a tree has fallen and revealed the underground.
- * English folk lore of the Ash, Oak, Birch and Lime
- * The woodland bodger. The spring of an overhead branch.
- * Coppices and pollards. Walking sticks and scout staves

- * The giant sequoia at St Nicholas Church
- * CO2, oxygen: oceans, trees and grass
- * Burning qualities of various trees
- * Dyes from bark, root and fruit. (Elderberry and nettle root)
- * Leaf prints

More content ideas and general chat