

About the arboretum

Westonbirt, The National Arboretum was founded in the early 19th Century by Robert Holford, a plant collector and visionary who created one of the world's finest tree collections. In 1956, the arboretum came into the care of the Forestry Commission (now operating as Forestry England) to conserve and continue the legacy for future generations.

The Friends of Westonbirt Arboretum charity was formed in 1985. As membership has grown the charity has increasingly helped the work of the arboretum through advocacy, and financial and practical support to unlock a whole range of opportunities to further the role of Westonbirt as The National Arboretum.

Our place in a changing world

A 10-year vision for Westonbirt,
The National Arboretum

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the friends
of Westonbirt
Arboretum
Registered Charity 293190



Westonbirt, The National Arboretum is cared for by Forestry England and supported by the Friends of Westonbirt Arboretum charity

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The National Arboretum: a national treasure

Westonbirt, The National Arboretum is a remarkable place; a beautiful and inspiring landscape that people can visit to enjoy and learn about trees. The combination of maturity, species diversity and landscape style creates one of the world's most extraordinary arboreta – and provides us with an iconic status in tree and landscape heritage.

With 15,000 tree specimens, five national tree collections and seasonal activities for all, visitors can come along to Westonbirt throughout the year and be met with a whole new environment as the seasons come and go. There's always something new to discover.

Whether our visitors get involved in workshops, events and guided tours or simply wander around the arboretum, there's something to inspire and delight around every corner. And in terms of science, ours is the perfect collection to research more about our trees today as well as helping to determine what could happen in the future.

A time to act

75%
of land animals
and plants live
in forests

50%
of deforestation
is caused by
farming, livestock,
mining and drilling

20%
of greenhouse
gas emissions
comes from
deforestation

60,065
global tree
species

119
billion tonnes
of CO₂ per year are
absorbed by trees
and forests

10,000
global tree species
are thought to be
threatened with
extinction

We are in a time of unprecedented change and increased understanding of the need to act swiftly to address climate change. There is only one proven technology to remove carbon dioxide from the air: trees. Yet trees are also under threat from the effects of climate change and other human impacts. At the same time we have developed a greater appreciation of the wider benefits of trees, particularly for well-being.

Andrew Smith
Forestry England Arboretum Director

As we look forward to the bicentenary of the arboretum in 2029, we set out what we need to achieve over the next decade to confront the challenges our trees face and the importance of connecting people with trees in our changing world. Through realising our 10-year vision for Westonbirt, we are confident the arboretum will continue to flourish and be better able to play its part in tackling these global challenges.

Mike Mintram
Friends of Westonbirt Arboretum Chairman



“From tackling poverty and hunger to mitigating climate change and conserving biodiversity, the positive impacts of forests and trees are fundamental to our existence.”

Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations. The State of the World's Forests 2018

Facing the future

Westonbirt is a living, evolving landscape. As we face the future and a changing world, both environmentally and socially, it's critical that we are ready to tackle challenges and harness opportunities as they arise.

- ▶ Understanding how trees will be affected by climate change, what we can do to manage our existing trees, and identifying which species will be best suited for an evolving environment will be the key to help us adapt our forests for the future.
- ▶ We will increase people's connection with nature, to help them understand the value of trees and to encourage positive action for the future.
- ▶ As well as being a national and international asset, the arboretum also plays an important role in the local economy by providing a place to work, learn and enjoy. Our financial sustainability needs to be at the core of our work.
- ▶ Together we can safeguard and enhance the arboretum for future generations while also serving the needs of people today.



Our mission

To connect people with trees to improve the quality of life.

Our vision

To be a world leader in trees, inspiring people through education, participation and conservation.

The next 10 years

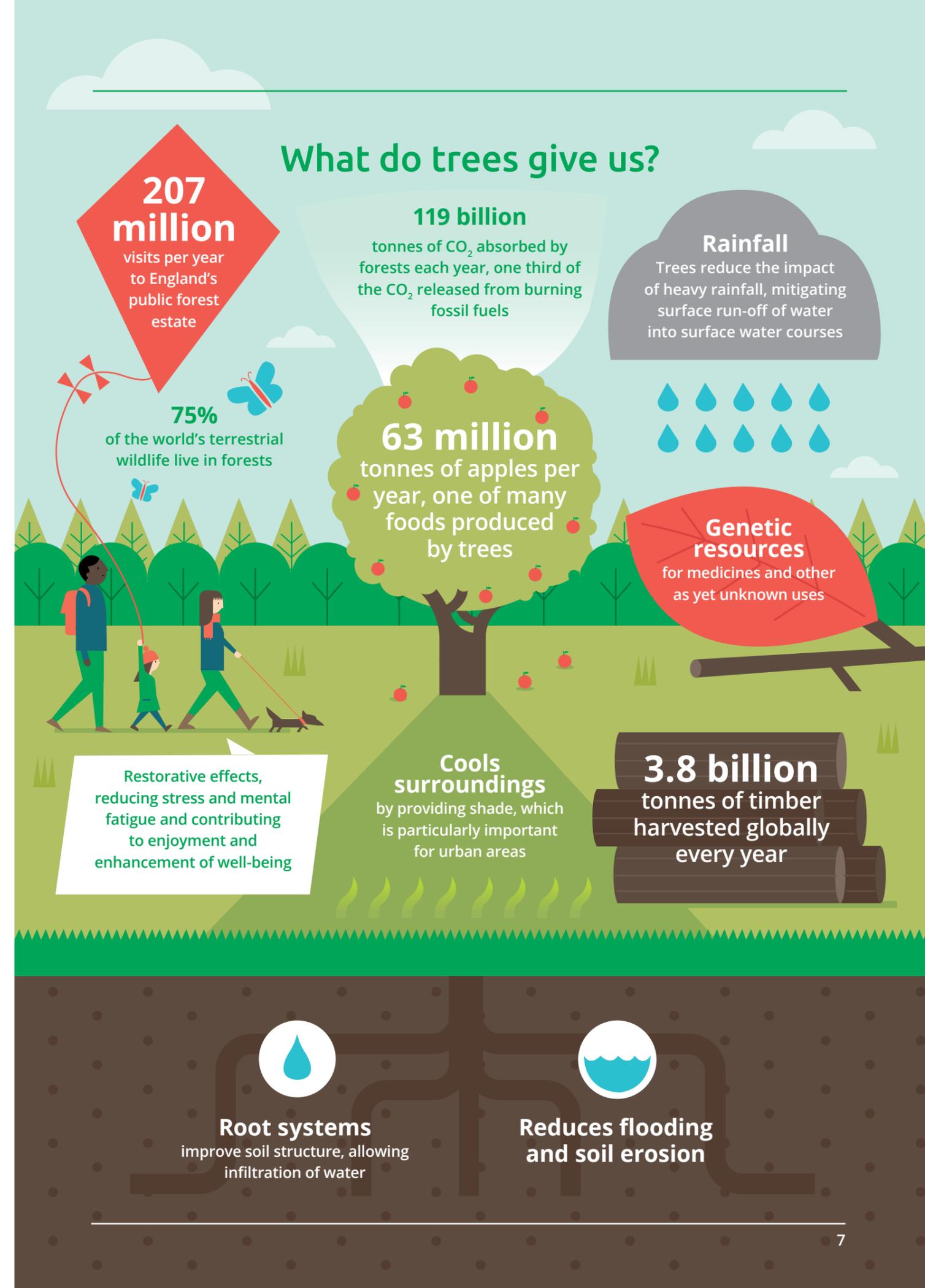
Our 10-year vision is centred on three key themes: **conservation, education and participation**. By studying and conserving our trees, sharing our knowledge and encouraging more people to engage with The National Arboretum, we can improve understanding of our natural assets, communicate the important role they play to all life on earth, and get more people benefitting from the positive impacts on health and well-being.

It's about **strengthening the connections between people and trees**. The next 10 years are key to making that happen.



"Our trees are becoming ever more threatened through climate change, disease and human intervention. The time to act is now – we need to address these threats."

Mike Coe, CEO, Friends of Westonbirt Arboretum



Conservation: Protecting our trees for the future

The challenge

The world's leading climate scientists have warned that there is only a decade left to change our behaviours and prevent a climate catastrophe. Trees will play a vital role in the solution to this challenge. At Westonbirt, within our living collection of 15,000 specimens, we have over 100 different species that are classified as threatened and in need of conservation. Unfortunately, native and non-native tree species alike may have little tolerance or resistance to fight against pests and diseases. Together with a changing climate, we anticipate threats to be evolving challenges that we will strive to overcome over the next decade.

Our response

Westonbirt will become an internationally recognised base for scientists to improve and expand our knowledge. We will work with national and international partners to tackle the difficult global challenges our changing world poses to trees and the ecosystems they support.

By predicting what the future may hold, we will identify species adapted to climate change and determine how to protect the trees we already have. To do this we will work to improve our facilities and skills, to enable us to conserve, develop and utilise our unique collection and share our knowledge widely.

A new centre of science and learning will make use of our 'living classroom' and include flexible facilities to host this collaborative work and share the importance and wonder of trees with everyone. To allow this transformation we will look to acquire new land around Westonbirt when the opportunity arises to grow our capacity.

We will also build an understanding of the value and importance of the collection we care for, taking radical action to improve our onsite sustainability.

"The world's response to climate change – in terms of adaptation, mitigation and resilience – must focus more on forests."

Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations. The State of the World's Forests 2018



Key commitments

- Develop our tree collection and landscape to make it more relevant to conservation and learning and growing resilience for generations to come.
- Collaborate with others to develop and communicate useful research about trees and their value to society.
- Understand the value of our natural capital to make better informed decisions.
- Become a leader in sustainability to encourage positive action.



Key commitments

- Inspire more people to connect with Westonbirt's heritage to empower them to make positive choices for the future.
- Enable more young people to participate actively to support our future, inspiring them to develop as future leaders.
- Encourage different perspectives to be heard and valued to foster creativity and innovation.
- Support the ongoing learning of all staff and volunteers to increase our effectiveness.



“Young people who spend time outdoors and forge a connection with the natural world are more likely to become environmentally-aware adults.”

Botanic Gardens Educational Network

Education: Sharing knowledge to create change

The challenge

In an increasingly urban and technologically advanced society, people are becoming more and more disconnected with the natural environment. As this change happens, they start to lose appreciation of all the critical environmental and social benefits our trees offer. With this loss of appreciation people are less able to act to support the environment and trees.

Our response

Westonbirt is a great place to visit – and it's the perfect setting to learn about our natural environment. By developing innovative activities and events within our new learning facilities we will challenge and inspire people to engage with our natural environment. We will lead the

conversation about trees, their role in society and how we can all secure their future.

Our activities will be for everyone; from the youngest visitor, through all life stages to create future leaders, volunteers and members to support our cause. We will also increase our links with academic institutions, enabling them to use the arboretum to apply and translate their research in the real world and communicate this to our visitors.

Over the next decade we will also develop a visitor experience that engages through interactivity and a new focus on the arts. It's about creating exciting and enlightening experiences from which everyone, from visitors to research partners, can learn and be inspired.

Participation: Connecting people with nature

The challenge

In our changing world there is increasing concern that growing sections of society can't, or don't, access natural environments like Westonbirt. They are missing out on the social and natural benefits they provide. With strong evidence linking the benefits of contact with nature on health and well-being, this needs to be addressed. Reduced access to trees can limit society's ability to live in a sustainable way, as they will be unable to understand the future challenges we all face.

Our response

Westonbirt has so much green space, flora and fauna, and we are perfectly placed to boost inclusive participation. We have already done so much, but we will continue to do more to improve access for those groups in most need, forging stronger links with our community partners. We will make sure that people are better able to experience our natural environment through a variety of media, connecting with our trees to improve their mental health and well-being.

Our staff and volunteers are committed to learning and sharing their knowledge with visitors, making every interaction an inspiring one by developing a broader range of talks, tours and interpretation. We will empower people to participate in our development to help shape our decisions.

We will make significant improvements to our outdoor spaces, ensuring they are designed for the needs of all. Our visitor welcome will inspire people to connect with the natural environment, understand the arboretum and join as members in lifelong support of our cause.

We will remodel and expand our central facilities - including café, commercial, exhibition and natural play areas, while continuing to showcase the work of the arboretum. Through this, we will create a more immersive visitor experience.

This will promote happier, healthier lives while conserving our thriving heritage for generations to come.



“The obesity rate of children living in areas with good access to green spaces is 11-19% lower than in those who have limited or no access.”

Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations. The State of the World's Forests 2018



Key commitments

- Provide a world class and inclusive welcome to positively engage people with the arboretum.
- Raise the arboretum's profile as 'a world leader in trees' to grow support and recognition for our work and enable us to influence decision makers.
- Use the therapeutic benefits of the arboretum to improve people's physical and mental well-being.
- Grow our volunteering and membership, creating advocates for our cause.

Now is the time for Westonbirt, The National Arboretum to respond to the challenges of our changing world. We have the opportunity to demonstrate the critical connections between people and trees.

- ▶ This is our 10-year vision. It's an exciting time. Never before has the need to adapt and respond to the future been so great or your support been more vital.
- ▶ Working together we will achieve our goals to conserve Westonbirt for future generations, connect more people than ever before with trees, and also make a positive contribution to our global challenges.

