



Forthill Park Tree Trail



Fermanagh & Omagh
District Council
Comhairle Ceantair
Fhear Manach agus na hÓmaí



Welcome to Forthill Park!

Hi there! Welcome to Forthill Park, a place to learn and play. This Tree Trail challenges you to find different trees and features in the park and find out more about them.

Instructions:

So go forth and explore!

- ★ Follow the map to find each of the 8 Tree Trail posts in and around the park
- ★ Each post has a colourful plaque with a picture of a leaf/tree or flower on it
- ★ Find the same tree in the leaflet to the picture on the plaque
- ★ Either draw your own picture in the blank space or why not take a tree bark rubbing with a crayon?
- ★ Read the fun facts about this picture
- ★ Answer any quizzing questions or do the suggested activities on each page
- ★ Continue around the park to find all 8 plaques

*We hope you enjoy the park today
and visit again soon.*

HAVE FUN!

Let's start! ready steady...

My name is: _____

What is today's date? _____

I'm here today with:

- my school my family my friend other

Find the Welcome to Forthill Park sign and learn all about Forthill. Follow the map below to find each of the trees in the trail and our wildlife area.



A bit about Forthill Park

The park has had different names in the past.

It is called the Forthill because there was a star shaped fort here & the fort was on a hill! Simple really! You can see this star shaped fort to this day. Cole's Monument is at its centre.

At one time it was called Cow Hill; a place where the local people grazed their cattle.

It was called "Camomile Hill" because at one time it was covered in Camomile plants.

The Park opened to public in 1832 but it became overgrown and was developed again the 1890s when the playpark and the bandstand were added. Find out more about the history of the park at the end of your trail book.



Monkey Puzzle

Araucaria araucana

spirals

leathery

spiny cones

catkins

spiky

living fossil

triangular leaves

non native

dioecious

green

jay

Create a tree rubbing here



Monkey Puzzle

Fact File

- Monkey puzzle is native to South America and is the national tree of Chile.
- It can grow to an amazing 40 metres in height and live for more than 1,200 years.
- The tree's common name comes from the idea that a monkey would be unable to climb it. It's also known as the Chilean pine or the Chile pine, although it's not a member of the pine family.
- It is said that speaking while passing one will bring bad luck or cause you to grow a monkey's tail!
- Monkey puzzle trees have been around for around 200 million years and rubbed shoulders with many dinosaurs - they're so-called 'living fossils'.

Activity



Match the print to the animal, and the animal to the picture.

Deer

Deer hoof prints look like sausages with pointy ends.

Pine marten

Pine martens have five toes and leave claw marks. The rear pad is shaped like a fat chevron.

Squirrel

Squirrels leave complicated tracks with lots of pad and claw marks.

Fox

Foxes have four toes, and the rear pad is usually the same size as the toes.

Duck

Ducks have webbed feet to help them swim, and leave very distinctive tracks.

Otter

Otters have five toes. You can sometimes see webbing between them.



Oak *Quercus robur*

biodiversity

woodland

mini-beasts

native

deciduous

squiggly leaf

acorns

From little acorns do mighty oaks grow

wonderful wildlife

Create a tree
rubbing here



Oak

Fact File

- The best native tree for wildlife - they support hundreds of different species from caterpillars, to beetles, to birds and squirrels.
- Can live to be well over 700 years.
- The wood is strong and durable so it's no wonder it was used to make mighty ships for war.
- The oak leaf has a squiggly shape.
- Acorns are the seed an oak produces in the autumn.

Activity

Folklore told that the following poem would predict the weather for the summer.

*“ If the oak before the ash,
Then we'll only have a splash.
If the ash before the oak,
Then we'll surely have a soak! ”*



There is some evidence to show that oak is now leafing before ash on a regular basis and this could be linked to climate change.

Climate change can be detected by the changes in wildlife behaviour each year. Be a citizen scientist and record your local wildlife each spring and autumn. Look out for signs of the seasons such as the first bud burst, the first swallow arriving in your garden or the first leaf turning brown. Log on and record your sightings with the Woodland Trust Nature's Calendar <http://www.naturescalendar.org.uk/>. This will help the scientists monitor the changes in our climate and how our wildlife adapts.

Why not start today...

Walk around the park and record 3 signs in nature that it is spring/summer/autumn/winter, depending on what season it is today!

Hawthorn

Crataegus monogyna

jaggy

fairies

thorns

red berries

haws

white blossom

caterpillars

Spring

native

Create a tree
rubbing here



Hawthorn



Fact File

- Common hawthorn is native to Europe, northwest Africa and western Asia.
- Hawthorn is typically planted as a hedge plant, especially on farms and roadsides.
- The fruit of hawthorn, called haws, are edible raw but are commonly made into jellies and jams.
- Some hawthorn trees can be known as fairy trees in the island of Ireland.
- What makes these fairy trees different from other trees is their location. Usually, the fairy tree is alone in the middle of the field or on the side of a road.
- The hawthorn tree is thought to be a sacred meeting place for the fairies and cutting down a lone hawthorn tree is avoided at all costs.

Activity

Throw a tea party for fairies living in Forthill! Look around for fallen flowers, twigs and leaves you could use to make;

Delicious food that fairies and elves might like to eat



Decorations for the party - ivy makes great bunting

Tiny plates and bowls

A miniature table

Teeny cutlery

Petite drinking goblets with dew for them to drink

How about adding small seating and a little tablecloth?

Fairy tea party

Cedar

Cedrus deodara

evergreen

coniferous

gigantic

aromatic

stately

non-native

needles

bats

owls

Create a tree
rubbing here



Cedar

Fact File

- Himalayan cedar is native to the western Himalayas in Eastern Afghanistan.
- It is a large evergreen coniferous tree reaching up to 50m.
- It has needles, not leaves and they are dark grey-green with transparent tips and arranged in spirals around side shoots in rosettes or clusters.
- It is widely grown as an ornamental tree, often planted in parks and large gardens for its drooping foliage.
- In the UK, cedar was planted in the grounds of nearly every stately home and mansion from the 1740s onwards.
- When the tree gets big and old, cracks develop and provide homes for birds and bats.

Activity

Native trees are those that have been in the UK and Ireland for a very long time; since the end of the ice age. These support more bugs, birds and biodiversity. Circle the 6 trees that are native to Northern Ireland.

Lime

Horse Chestnut

Common Oak

Maple

Willow

Beech

Holly

Aspen

Irish Yew

Sycamore

Birch

Acacia

Beech

Fagus sylvatica

oval leaves

nuts and masts

bark

smooth grey

shady seat

busy squirrels

non native

deciduous

Create a tree
rubbing here



Beech

Fact File

- A majestic tree that can grow really tall, up to 40 metres!
- The beech leaf is oval with smooth edges.
- The beech nuts are in 4-parted husks.
- The timber is used for fuel, furniture, tool handles, kitchen utensils and sports equipment.
- The nuts were also important as a source of food, particularly for pigs!
- Beech trees are native to southern England but now are widespread in Northern Ireland.

Activity

So far you should have seen at least 4 different species of trees. Can you draw their leaves onto this branch? (In winter if you can't see many leaves, make up some leaf shapes using patterns you can see around you).



Plants for Pollinators

clover

poppies

cosmos

dandelions

ox eye daisy

pretty flowers

red campion

butterflies

bumblebees

fuzzy buzzy

biodiversity

Draw a picture here



Plants for Pollinators

Parks and gardens are important habitats for lots of species such as birds, bugs and pollinators like bumblebees, solitary bees and butterflies. Forthill Park is brilliant for bees, hosting solitary bees in the mounds of the fort and lots of common bumblebees on the plants and trees.

Did you know?

It takes 5 times for a strawberry plant flower to be visited by a bumblebee before it can grow into a strawberry!



Bumblebees in focus



Buff-tailed Bumblebee



Common Carder Bumblebee



Early Bumblebee



Garden Bumblebee



Red-tailed Bumblebee



White-tailed Bumblebee

Activity

Mini-beast hunt

You can download mini-beast Identification sheets from www.biodiversityni.com or www.treetoolsforschools.org.uk.

- 🌿 In the warmer months look through the flowerbed for ladybirds, butterflies, caterpillars, bumblebees, beetles, spiders and more.
- 🌿 In the colder months look for spiders, beetles, millipedes, woodlice and any other creatures you can find lurking in the fallen leaves, dead grass, under stones and logs.

Horse Chestnut

Aesculus hippocastanum

shiny conkers

spiky chestnuts

big tall giant

knobbly bark

sticky buds

palmate leaves

deciduous

non native

Create a tree rubbing here



Horse Chestnut

Where in the World...

Horse Chestnut trees arrived here in the 16th century. They hail from South East Europe, Northern Greece and Albania in particular.



Fact File

- Best known for their shiny brown nuts called conkers.
- Have big fanned leaves with 5-7 'fingers' a bit like a hand!
- The buds are sticky ...ewwwwww!
- The most famous use of horse chestnut is in the game of conkers. The first record of the game of conkers is from the Isle of Wight in 1848.
- Conkers were fed to horses to cure them from illness in the olden days... perhaps this is where the name came from?



Activity

HUG A TREE

- Pick a tree and hug it with your friends! Be careful not to scratch or poke your face or eyes!
- Stretch out wide and put the tips of your fingers to your friends fingers.
- Count how many people it takes to hug the tree.
- Measure your arm span (*the distance between your outstretched fingers*)
- Add the measurements together to find out how wide the tree is!
- Or take an average of the arm spans and multiply by the number of people.



Name of your tree _____

Number of people _____

Average arm span _____

Girth of tree _____

Corsican Pine

Pinus nigra ssp laricio

scented

beautiful

tall and slender

needles

red bark

skinny

pine cones

squirrels

bonsai

Create a tree
rubbing here



Corsican Pine

Fact File

- 🌿 Pines have waxy needles that hold onto water more easily.
- 🌿 They are evergreen which means they don't lose their leaves in the winter.
- 🌿 Pine cones can predict the weather- they close up when it's going to rain.
- 🌿 Pines were traditionally planted to mark routes or landmarks in the countryside as its beautiful slender form and height made it stand out from other trees.

Activity

Red squirrels love eating the seeds from a pine cone! Grey squirrels like to eat acorns and beech nuts. They both store food in the autumn for those cold days in the winter. They need to have a good memory to find them again! Could you survive as a squirrel?

- 🌿 Collect 5 nuts or cones (stones will do if it is spring/-summer) from the park.
- 🌿 Find a good place to store or bury them.
- 🌿 Go off for a walk or finish this trail, then come back and see if you can find them!
- 🌿 Why not really test yourself and store the nuts on one visit to the park, then look for them the next time you come!

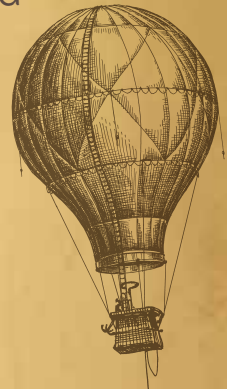
The Forthill Pleasure Park

In 1891 a man called Thomas Plunkett (a funny name) decided that he would make the Forthill a beautiful park once again.

1. How long ago is 1891? Do you know what century that is in?

He decided that the people in Enniskillen needed somewhere to go where they could relax and have a walk and where children could play. He planted new trees and made the park bigger; he even added a waterfall. He brought the first swings and the first slide to the park. The girls and the boys had to play on separate swings!!

When the park opened, he organised for a hot air balloon to take off from the Forthill park. It didn't get very far and came down close to where McDonald's is now!



For the opening, the park was decorated with Chinese Lanterns and there was a huge firework display. Special afternoon trains were organised to bring people to Enniskillen; about 6000 people were in the park that day. It was at this time that the steps to the park from Belmore Street were added.

To say thank you to Thomas Plunkett the people of Enniskillen had the beautiful bandstand in the centre of the park built in front of Cole's Monument. So, the Plunkett Bandstand, a fine Victorian bandstand, now sits beside a memorial to a man called Cole. There are 108 steps to the top of the column and 108 back to the bottom.

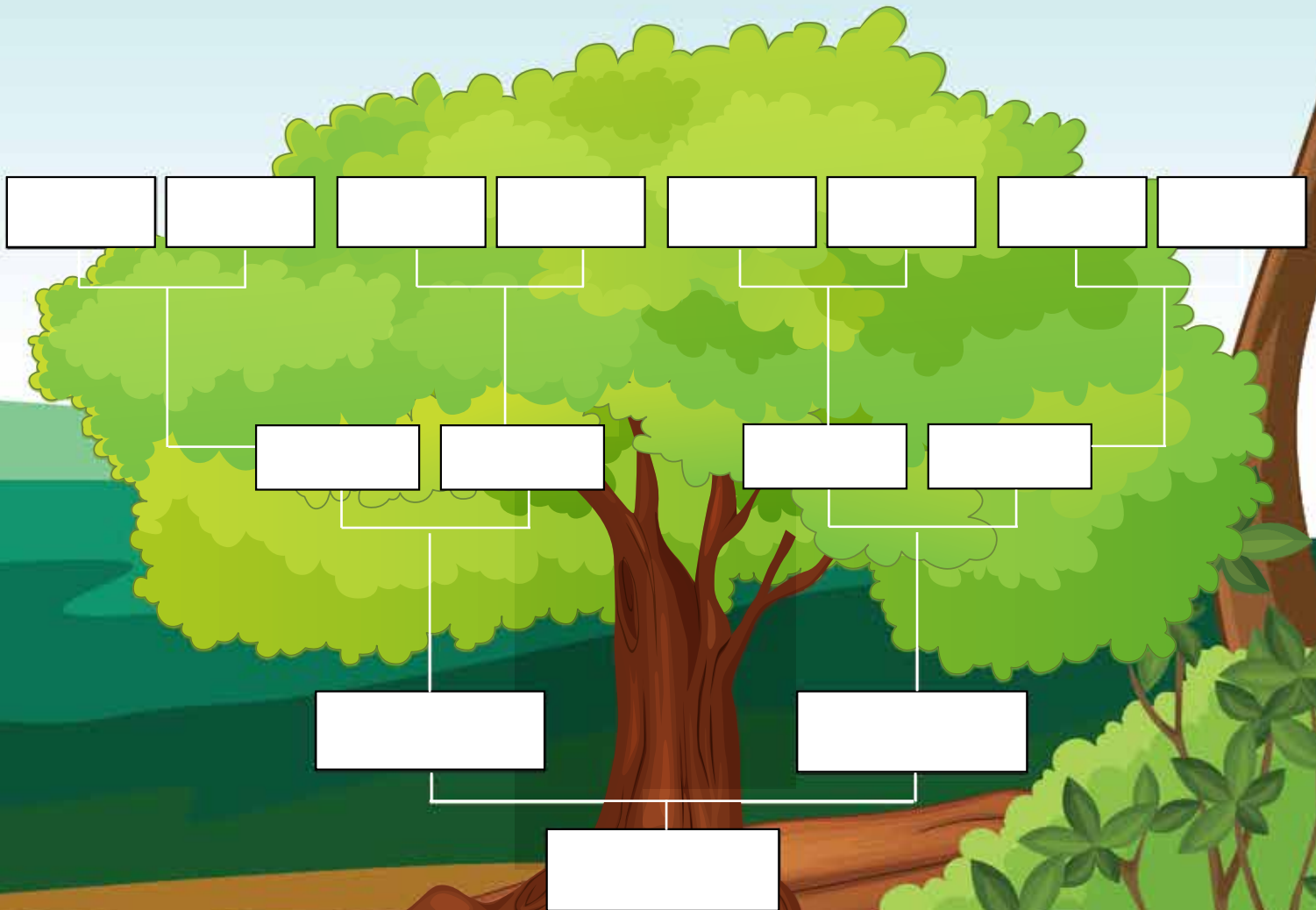
2. How many steps is that?

Chart your family tree

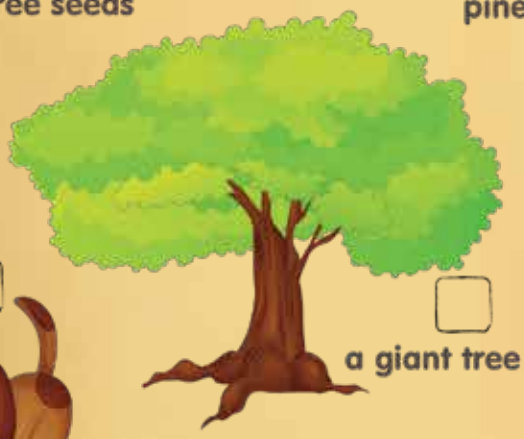
Trees have always held significance. Some clans had their own species of tree and held some trees, like the yew and oak, in great esteem.

Traditionally, living trees have played a central role in the practical, daily and spiritual lives of people. They served as landmarks and symbols of family and clan identity, and their importance can be measured by the great number of tree-based place-names we have e.g. Derrycree = doire or oakwood, Skea = thorn bush, Aghakeeran = field of the rowan trees.

Why not make your family tree below, starting with your immediate family. Research your ancestors and see how far in the past you can trace your roots! And why not research your townland too! Find out if it is linked to trees or nature.



Things I saw today....



Tree-mendous Tree Trail Quiz

Congratulations, you are nearly finished the Tree Trail workbook so now it is time to take the Tree-mendous Tree Trail Quiz!! See how quick you can answer these questions.

Ready, Steady, Go!

1. What date did Forthill Park open?

2. Name one other name Forthill has been called.

3. Name two native trees.

4. What do you call the tree that conkers come from?

5. How tall can a beech tree grow to?

6. Name two signs in nature that spring has arrived.

7. What is a habitat?

8. Name one plant that is good for pollinators.

9. Name one insect you might find in the park.

10. Which of the trees you have seen today is your favourite?

This Tree Trail and booklet were developed as part of a Forthill Park project, part funded by Fermanagh and Omagh District Council through the Landfill Communities Fund administered by Ulster Wildlife.

For further information about opportunities to enjoy wildlife activities in the Fermanagh and Omagh District Council area, contact the Biodiversity Officer at biodiversity@fermanaghomagh.com or phone on 0300 303 1777

This document is available online at www.fermanaghomagh.com and on request in other languages and formats.

