

LEARNING ABOUT FORESTS - MALTA

Issue No 1



Welcome to LEAF your gateway to outdoor learning

LEAF (Learning About Forests) is an international programme locally run by Nature Trust Malta. It has been officially introduced in Malta during the last scholastic year. The programme works in parallel with the already established environmental education programmes; Eco-Schools (locally known as EkoSkola) and YRE (Young Reporters for the Environment).

The need to learn about forests goes beyond how green or less green the Maltese islands might or should look to the odd tourist or the keen environmentalist. In essence it is a deeper need to understand the key role forests play for sustainable life on our planet and whether that role is being compromised by the way of life we lead. It is not just about luring young learners to become intrigued by the joys and wonders of the forest and its inhabitants. It is an opportunity to sensitize young learners and youth alike to appreciate the intricate relationships that take place in local woodlands and in forests around the world and how these can be compromised by the choices we make each day. The programme addresses all the functions forests fulfill for people; cultural, ecological, economical and social.



Johann Gatt is the National LEAF Coordinator.

For any queries or further details he can be contacted on: js.gatt@gmail.com

Start learning about forests -

..... download your application form now!

Click on this link: <http://www.ekoskola.org.mt/uploads/2012/10/FEE-programmes-Application-Eng.pdf> (registered Eco-Schools and YRE schools need not re-apply)



Nature Trust (Malta)
PO Box 9, Valletta Malta. VLT 1000
Email: info@naturetrustmalta.org
Phone: (+356) 21313150 / Fax: (+ 356) 21320778



LEAF projects



Measuring the circumference of an oak tree trunk in one of the last remaining old forest woodlots at Mġiebah Valley

With a total forest land cover of 1% and a very high population density one could argue that such a programme would hardly take root in our island. Nevertheless the LEAF programme is being adopted and adapted as a vehicle to change these issues into opportunities.

First and foremost it aims at fostering awareness about the importance and vulnerability of the old forest remnants. Safeguarding and appreciating what we have. Secondly, the programme is trying to instil the love for trees irrespective of the places they occur. With the

majority of the population living in urban areas the first encounter with trees is usually in urban spaces. Thirdly and arguably the toughest of them all, is to convince all stakeholders about the importance of making responsible choices. Making them aware that the choices we make each day could compromise the very same forests we rely so much upon and the livelihood of wildlife and indigenous people found therein. Last but not least is creating a general drive and a concerted effort to grow and plant more trees.

**Safeguarding
what we have.**

**Instilling love
for trees.**

**Making
responsible
choices.**

**Planting more
trees.**

The following are easy to follow steps for LEAF schools ;

- Appoint a forest team.
- Choose an area of concern.
- Devise an action plan at the beginning of scholastic year.
- Planned activities must cover multiple functions of forests;

ecological understanding of forests and forest processes

economical dimension of forests

socio-cultural understanding of forests

- Focus on the international LEAF theme.
- Include field trips to forests or at least carry out activities outdoor in a park or similar areas.
- Plan at least one tree planting activity/ session per scholastic year.
- Update your forest noticeboard regularly and try to involve the whole school community.
- Compile a report and send to the national coordinator at the end of the scholastic year.

EkoSkola, YRE and LEAF

As in the case of EkoSkola, some might actually think that LEAF could be envisaged as an added burden.

The general strategy suggested is that of infusing environmental education concepts into the already existing subjects and not that of presenting a new subject. Besides increasing awareness of the environment, the weaving of an environmental education dimension in a particular subject enriches the subject concerned and thus makes it

more relevant and interesting. All three programmes complement each other and in their own distinctive way empower students to adopt an active role in environmental decision-making and action in their school community.

Each year we organize various events whereby students and educators have the opportunity to explore ways to integrate any of the three programmes. **Join us on our next venture!**



**Fun Walk at
Foresta 2000,
May 2012**

Project tips and ideas



In each issue we'll be sharing some tips for LEAF schools that could easily form the basis of their project work. In this case interested schools may opt to do some research and find out which are the oldest, biggest, tallest trees and those with the widest trunks in the Maltese islands. Experts in the respective field might prove to be invaluable assets for this ambitious project.



Website and facebook page

The LEAF coordination team is currently working on a new LEAF website which will be launched soon. A facebook page was also created. You are invited to visit, leave your comments, share ideas and come up with suggestions. Like, share and enjoy!

www.facebook.com/groups/LEAFmalta/



Like us.....
Share us ...
We're
NOT
ONLY
on
facebook!
We're trees
we're everywhere!

LEAF Malta Award scheme

Schools which would have successfully satisfied the programme's criteria will be awarded with the prestigious LEAF shield that endorses the work carried out and symbolizes their commitment for the coming years. Each year an extra 'leaf' would be added to the shield with the scholastic year engraved provided that the forest team of that school would have met the goals set and satisfied the programme's criteria.

The idea of this memento originated from last year's LEAF theme:

'products, services and benefits from forests.' The base of the shield is made of discarded wooden pallets whereas the actual LEAF symbol is a special kind of 3D papier mache resulting in very hard material expertly handcrafted by Gozitan artist Charlie Camilleri.

San Anton School forest team was awarded this prestigious shield during the FEE Award ceremony 2012 for an interesting project they carried out about the old forest remnants at Mġiebaħ valley limits of Mellieħa.



The LEAF shield

LEAFlinks

In each issue two interesting stories will be included for your attention. The stories in this issue deal mainly with tree-logging .



Would you live for a couple of days in a makeshift tree house? Forest activist Miranda Gibson spends 457 days in the tree-top of a gum tree 60 metres above ground to keep tree-loggers at bay. Watch her amazing story to learn more about this fantastic feat.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i8nkaaQdl9k>

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2013-03-07/suspicious-fire-ends-epic-tree-sit-in/4559726>

Dogs are usually microchipped for various reasons but have you ever heard of trees being microchipped? Implanting a microchip into the base of a tree will help determine where the wood has come from—so if it's been illegally logged and sold on, the buyers will know. Details such as; the exact location, where the tree was planted, the size of it, and even who cut it down will be ingrained in the microchip. Learn more by visiting the following link:

<http://www.treehugger.com/clean-technology/brazilian-trees-implanted-with-microchips-for-forest-management.html>

