

# LEARNING ABOUT FORESTS - MALTA

Issue No 2



## LEAF ... your gateway to outdoor learning!

Dear forest friends,

Welcome to the second issue of our newsletter. This scholastic year is proving to be another rollercoaster ride for the LEAF coordination and the registered LEAF schools.

The year kicked off with a number of jury visits in LEAF schools who had submitted their reports before the Summer recess. A number of LEAF workshops about *Mediterranean underwater forests* were held during a turtle release event in early November. This was followed by the FEE seminar where a number of hands on workshop sessions were also held.

The YRE and LEAF Award ceremonies were definitely the highlight of the first term where four schools were awarded the prestigious LEAF award for projects carried out last year.

2014 started in earnest with the ENO Tree Planting Day for Peace and a number of meetings with LEAF forest teams that are working on this year's projects. Prospective LEAF award applicants are reminded to send their completed applications by not later than **Monday 12<sup>th</sup> May 2014**.

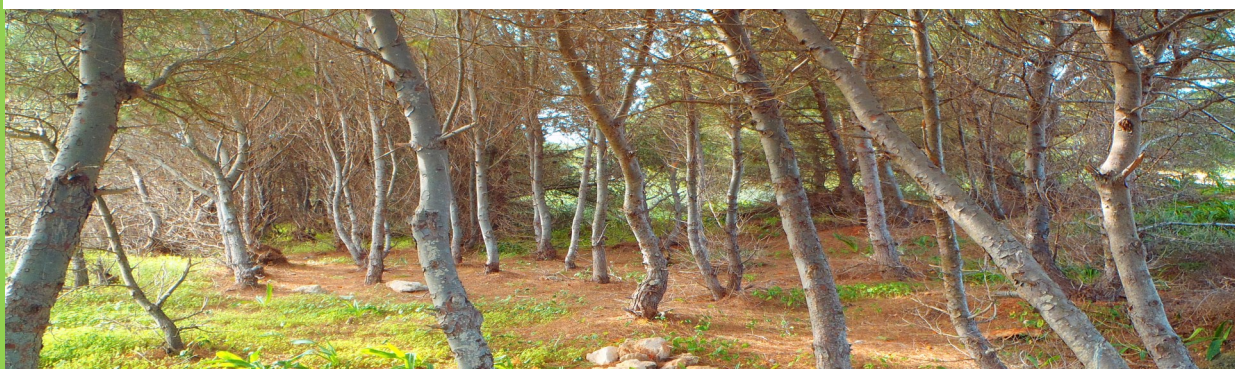
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## Start learning about forests -

... download your application form from [\*\*HERE\*\*](#) now!

(registered Eco-Schools and YRE schools need not re-apply)



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## Mediterranean Underwater Forests

During a turtle release event held on 8<sup>th</sup> November 2013 students had the opportunity to participate in interactive workshop sessions about the various FEE programmes. The LEAF workshop focused on the importance of the distinctive flowering sea grass *Posedonia oceanica*. Students had the opportunity to learn about the ecological, socio-cultural and economical aspects of this sea grass. The Blue Flag beach of Paradise Bay, Ċirkewwa provided the perfect setting for the session as



students had the opportunity to rummage through the various *posedonia* banquettes to learn more about this Mediterranean sea grass. Similarities were drawn between the ecosystems of *posedonia* meadows and that of terrestrial forests. Special reference was also made to the vital role of this special plant in combating climate change.

## FEE Seminars



The FEE seminars organized in Malta and Gozo during November 2013 were very well received. Educators were presented with tangible ways on how best to integrate the EkoSkola, YRE and LEAF programmes. The hands on interactive LEAF sessions for students were specifically designed to increase the awareness about the importance of indigenous trees. The response was quite overwhelming and requests for further details about the programme have since increased. Of particular

interest was a request from a school in Gozo which was followed up by a guided field tour of a valley within walking distance from school, a seed potting session and tree identification games.

## LEAF and YRE Award ceremony



Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2013 was a special day for San Anton School, St Francis School-Cospicua, St Michael School and St Edward's College. The LEAF forest teams of these schools were awarded with the prestigious LEAF Award for various interesting projects carried out during the previous scholastic year. The awards were presented by Hon. Minister Leo Brincat during a ceremony held at Xrobb I-Għaġin Park.

The wooden plaque was not only a first for Malta but also the first plaque of its kind to be presented in all LEAF countries following a re-branding exercise. The wood used for the plaque is PEFC (**Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification**) certified beech.

**We are currently working on the LEAF website which will be launched on 21<sup>st</sup> March 2014 to mark the UN International Day of the Forests.**



## ENO Tree Planting Day for Peace



On Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> January 2014 ninety students accompanied by their teachers, participated in a tree planting event at *Xrobb I-Għagin Nature Park and Sustainable Development Centre*. The event was organized by Nature Trust Malta through its *LEAF* (Learning About Forests) programme in collaboration with *PARKs* and the *Plant Health* directorates within the Ministry for Sustainable Development, the Environment and Climate Change. The initiative is part of a worldwide campaign organised by ENO

(Environment Online) which is a global virtual school network for sustainable development. ENO made a strong commitment in Rio+20 Summit of planting **100 million trees by 2017**.

All schools planted a specific type of indigenous palm tree called *Sigra tal-Gummar*. A number of trees were sponsored by BOV. Minister Leo Brincat was also present for the occasion. When questioned by a number of young reporters about the importance of such a prestigious event, he answered that he considered it as very important one since the lively participation of the students attending makes it more effective as they are more likely to pass on the message.

The event ended with a number of interactive learning sessions where students learned about the problem pests can cause to the environment, how to grow dwarf fan palms, the different types of trees we can find at the Nature Park and what people used to do with palm leaves. One of the sessions was led by the renowned founder of Nature Trust Malta, Mr Guido Lanfranco.

## Project tips and ideas

Ever wondered how many wooden pallets are imported, used and recycled locally? A brief search on wood packaging in the Eurostat pages would yield some interesting results. It would be even more interesting to trace the origin of the timber used in these pallets.

Ever heard of FSC or PEFC? Both are accredited eco-labels promoting the responsible management of forest worldwide. Some pallets have other logos. Due to the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC), most pallets shipped across national borders must be made of materials that are incapable of being a carrier of invasive species of insects and plant diseases. ***It would be interesting to know what percentage of the imported pallets carry these logos or the equivalent?***

For more project ideas visit our facebook page [LEAF Learning About Forests Malta](https://www.facebook.com/groups/LEAFmalta/) <https://www.facebook.com/groups/LEAFmalta/>



## LEAFlinks



## Font matters...

The conceptual negation that 'Money doesn't grow on trees' may well be part of Pinocchio's story plot but a recent study has shown that you can save both by a simple change in font.

We all use different fonts in our documents but did you know that using a particular font can help save on ink and paper?

Some argue that Garamond 11 is denser and more lines of text can be fitted. Others prefer Arial narrow. A couple of years ago **ecofont** was developed by a Dutch company. Ecofont software saves ink and toner by leaving small holes in the letters. Originally the ecofont was developed on Vera Sans font since it is widely used in the Netherlands. Lately a study by the University of Wisconsin - Green Bay, revealed that Century Gothic saves more ink and toner than Ecofont. In the meantime the Dutch company quickly developed Ecofont on a number of other fonts claiming that it is still the most economical solution.

As the war of fonts wages on, one word of advice:

**Please consider your environmental responsibility**

## Forests Are Lovers of the Sea

What relationship is there between forests and oysters?

Decades ago, Katsuhiko Matsunaga, a marine chemist at Hokkaido University in Japan, discovered that when tree leaves decompose, they leach acids into the ocean that help fertilize plankton. When plankton thrive, so does the rest of the food chain. In a campaign called Forests Are Lovers of the Sea, fishermen have replanted forests along coasts and rivers to bring back fish and oyster stocks. And they have returned.

For more information go to this [link](http://www.global1.youth-leader.org/2012/04/oyster-fisherman-building-a-forest-with-the-legendary-grandpa-oyster-shigeatsu-hatakeyamas-story/):

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