

Exploring UK locations (Zoom In, Zoom Out)

Forests: deciduous and coniferous woodland and biodiversity

De-Graft: Mixed forests like this are one of the most important habitats and ecosystems we have across the UK. And today, I'm getting a close up look on one of these...

This forest is on the edge of a place called Derwentwater. It's part of the Lake District, which is England's largest national park.

Later locals Joseph and Ava are going to help me get a zoomed in look at this woodland. But first, let's zoom out...

The Lake District is in the north of England. It's one of 15 official national parks in the UK. The Cairngorms are the largest, most northerly national park in the UK, all the way up here in Scotland.

There are three national parks in Wales - Snowdonia, Pembrokeshire Coast, and the Brecon Beacons.

Northern Ireland doesn't have any official national parks. But it does have many country parks, nature reserves and nine areas of outstanding natural beauty.

Forests are one of the most biodiverse habitats in the UK and they're important for us humans too. Trees help capture carbon through leaves, wood and soil which helps fight against climate change. Leaves help us to breathe by taking in carbon dioxide and releasing oxygen into the atmosphere. Also, research shows spending time in forests and places that are rich in nature is good for our physical and mental well-being.

Joseph and Ava have joined me in the forest and I've set them the challenge of finding as many different kinds of fallen leaves and seeds as they can. What is this?

Child: It looks like a tiny pine cone.

De-Graft: So guys, there are loads of incredible things all around us but what are your favourite things that you've collected?

Child: I've got a big piece of bark.

Child: And I have this...

De-Graft: Woah! I've got a big, mossy, stick looking thing.

Child: Wow!

De-Graft: Now there are loads of different species of tree in the UK and they fall into two categories. We've got *deciduous* trees. Now, they are also called broadleaf. They lose their leaves in the winter and grow them back in the summer like an oak tree. Have we got any oak leaves in our baskets?

Child: Oh, I think I've got one!

De-Graft: Aye, you've got a whole cluster of oak leaves there! And we've also got *coniferous*. Now, they produce seeds as cones. Does anyone have a pine cone in their basket?

Child: Uh, yeah.

De-Graft: Yeah, Ava, that's the one.

In some locations, forests are carefully managed. Trees are harvested for wood, and then replanted. Other forests are completely protected and there's no tree cutting allowed at all. And in other places, trees are cut down to clear the land for things such as farming and building houses, this is called deforestation. It destroys ecosystems and contributes to climate change.

What are your thoughts on people cutting down trees?

Child: I think it's alright to cut down trees as long as you replant them. Trees are kind of very important in the world because they produce oxygen, and we need oxygen.

De-Graft: OK, time to compare... The tallest tree in the Lake District is 57 metres tall. But the tallest tree in the world is in California and it's just about double the height at 116 metres. That's the same size as the length of five tennis courts!

What's the closest national park or woodland where you live? What species of plants and animals do they have there? Zoom in and have a look for yourself.

Right, guys, who can find the biggest leaf? Go!