



News Release

Friday, 06 November 2009

Children sow a new generation of oak trees



As part of the OneOak project work, children from Bladon C of E Primary school have sowed 50 special acorns with the help of Oxfordshire tree nursery Nicholsons.

The children have been taking part in the Sylva Foundation's environmental education project OneOak (www.OneOak.info). The project is following the full life story of one oak tree growing on the Blenheim Estate. With support from the Sylva Foundation and the Oxfordshire Forest School Service, the children from Bladon and four other Oxfordshire primary schools have been visiting the oak woodlands of Blenheim, and getting to know the special OneOak tree.

- 19 children from Bladon C of E Primary School helped collect thousands of oak acorns from the Blenheim Estate this Autumn.
- Niel Nicholson from Nicholsons visited the school and showed the children how to sow the acorns to grow a new generation of oak trees.
- 2009 has been a bad seed year for oak trees on the Blenheim Estate. Only 50 acorns were judged viable.

Dr Gabriel Hemery, CEO of the Sylva Foundation, said "It has been difficult collecting acorns this autumn but it quite usual for oak trees to only produce good quantities of seeds every 4-7 years." The OneOak project will be publicly launched in January with the felling of the oak tree. Hemery added "It has been wonderful to see the 300 primary school children in the woods and playing the part of forest scientists and artists. Getting them actively involved in growing a new generation of oak trees is really important so that they can understand the full life cycle of trees, and appreciate the sustainability of good forestry."

Niel Nicholson of Oxfordshire-based nursery Nicholsons said “This project is a fantastic way of getting the children involved in a way that will teach them the whole lifecycle of a plant. What this means and how the felling of a tree is the end of one life, but the start of many others and how the timber from the one tree can be made into many different products that will be around for a long time to come.” Niel showed the children how good seed (acorns) will sink in water and the children then worked to separate the floating seeds from the healthy sinking seeds. Niel added that “It was disappointing to find that from our collection of around 1380 acorns, only 50 were probably healthy seeds but undetermined the children got to work sowing the 50 healthy seeds in the rootrainers.” Nicholsons will raise the seedlings in their nursery in North Oxfordshire with help from the children during the year. Let’s hope that as many as possible of our precious 50 sown seeds germinate and then survive as seedlings.

Teacher Carolyn Thorne said “The children and I are thoroughly enjoying this project. It is truly cross-curricular, encompassing science, maths, literacy, art, geography and history. We are even working with West Oxfordshire School Sports Partnership to create an Oak tree dance! There are many beautiful trees in our area and the class is learning how important they are to our lives, from breathing to the various uses of the wood. It is very rewarding for the children to meet and work with different experts, and they are learning the best way – having real life, meaningful experiences”.

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Notes for editors

Contacts

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1. The **Sylva Foundation** is a forestry charity, working for sustainable woodlands: www.Sylva.org.uk .
OneOak project: www.OneOak.info
 2. **Nicholsons** is a well established family run business based in North Oxfordshire that covers all aspects of Forestry and Landscaping as well as having a thriving Plant Centre and Nursery which is open to the public <http://www.nicholsons.gb.com/>
 3. **Bladon Church of England Primary School** <http://www.bladon.oxon.sch.uk/>