



# Picture News

*Advanced*

*8<sup>th</sup> February 2021*

What's going on this week?



Tree planting is a good solution to tackle climate change and protect biodiversity but planting trees in the wrong place can do more harm than good, experts at the Royal Botanic Gardens in Kew have explained. Scientists have outlined 10 rules for tree-planting, which they say must be a top priority for all nations this decade.

An area of around 40,000km<sup>2</sup> of tropical forest is lost every year around the world. Dr Paul Smith, a conservation scientist at the Botanical Gardens Conservation in Kew believes, "Planting the right trees in the right place must be a priority for all nations as we face a crucial decade for ensuring the future of our planet."

This week's news story: [www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-55795816](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-55795816)

This week's useful video: [www.bbc.co.uk/ideas/videos/what-if-everyone-in-the-world-planted-a-tree/p084ttpq](http://www.bbc.co.uk/ideas/videos/what-if-everyone-in-the-world-planted-a-tree/p084ttpq)



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## Main question:

### How important is it to plant more trees?

#### Listen, think, share

- Read through this week's story and share what we know about trees. Can we identify any different types? Talk about trees in our local area. Are there many? Are we aware of deforestation? Do we know anywhere in the world where it is taking place? Do we know why deforestation occurs? Some of the direct causes of deforestation are agricultural expansion, wood extraction (e.g. logging or wood harvest for domestic fuel or charcoal), and infrastructure expansion such as road building and urbanization. Rarely is there a single direct cause for deforestation. Who do you believe has the responsibility to prevent deforestation? E.g. the landowner, the country's government? Can you think of possible ways to help reduce deforestation?
- Since humans began practising agriculture around 12,000 years ago, it's estimated that nearly half of the world's estimated 5.8 trillion trees have disappeared (according to a 2015 study published in the journal, Nature). Does this figure surprise you? As such, it has been thought by many that planting as many trees as possible would solve the problem of deforestation - however scientists at Kew Gardens have announced that large scale tree planting schemes can be harmful if not carried out properly. What do you think some of the reasons for this could be? Dr Kate Hardwick, the scheme's Conservation Partnership Coordinator said: "When people plant the wrong trees in the wrong place, it can cause considerably more damage than benefits, failing to help people or nature."
- The scientists at the Royal Botanical Gardens at Kew have proposed rules that they believe will help to rebuild forests, safely around the world. These include, protecting existing forests first, putting local people at the heart of tree-planting projects and selecting the right tree species to maximise biodiversity. By using a mix of species, it can encourage a much richer ecosystem. Do you think it is important that new trees are only ever planted after careful consideration? Can you think of any exemptions for when the rules may not apply?
- Meg Lowman, who is the director of the Tree Foundation in Florida, USA believes, "Forests are the lifeline of our world, without them, we lose extraordinary and essential functions for life on Earth." Try to imagine a world without trees or forests. What or who do you think would be impacted most?

## Further questions for discussion

- Research an area or place in the world that has suffered from deforestation. How has the deforestation impacted the area?
- There are many proven links between spending time in nature and benefits to mental health. In Japan 'forest bathing' is a popular practice. It involves simply spending time amongst trees and wildlife to bring a sense of peace and relaxation. Talk about why you think nature evokes such a positive influence for so many?