

Terrific Trees...

Apart from looking nice, did you know that trees have a number of valuable uses and without trees, the earth probably wouldn't exist

- *Most importantly, like all plants, trees filter our air – 'breathing in' poisonous carbon dioxide and 'breathing out' oxygen that we all need to live*
- *As well as providing timber, they give us paper, glues, artificial fibres / cloth, oils and many more essential products.*
- *They provide homes and shelter for birds, animals and insects – a big oak tree like the ones in our woods can support over 500 different species of wildlife*
- *They are the basis of many medicines – for example, leaves from the yew tree are used to produce cancer fighting drugs*
- *They provide food for us humans and also for the animals, birds and insects – can you think of 10 foods we get from trees?*



Branches

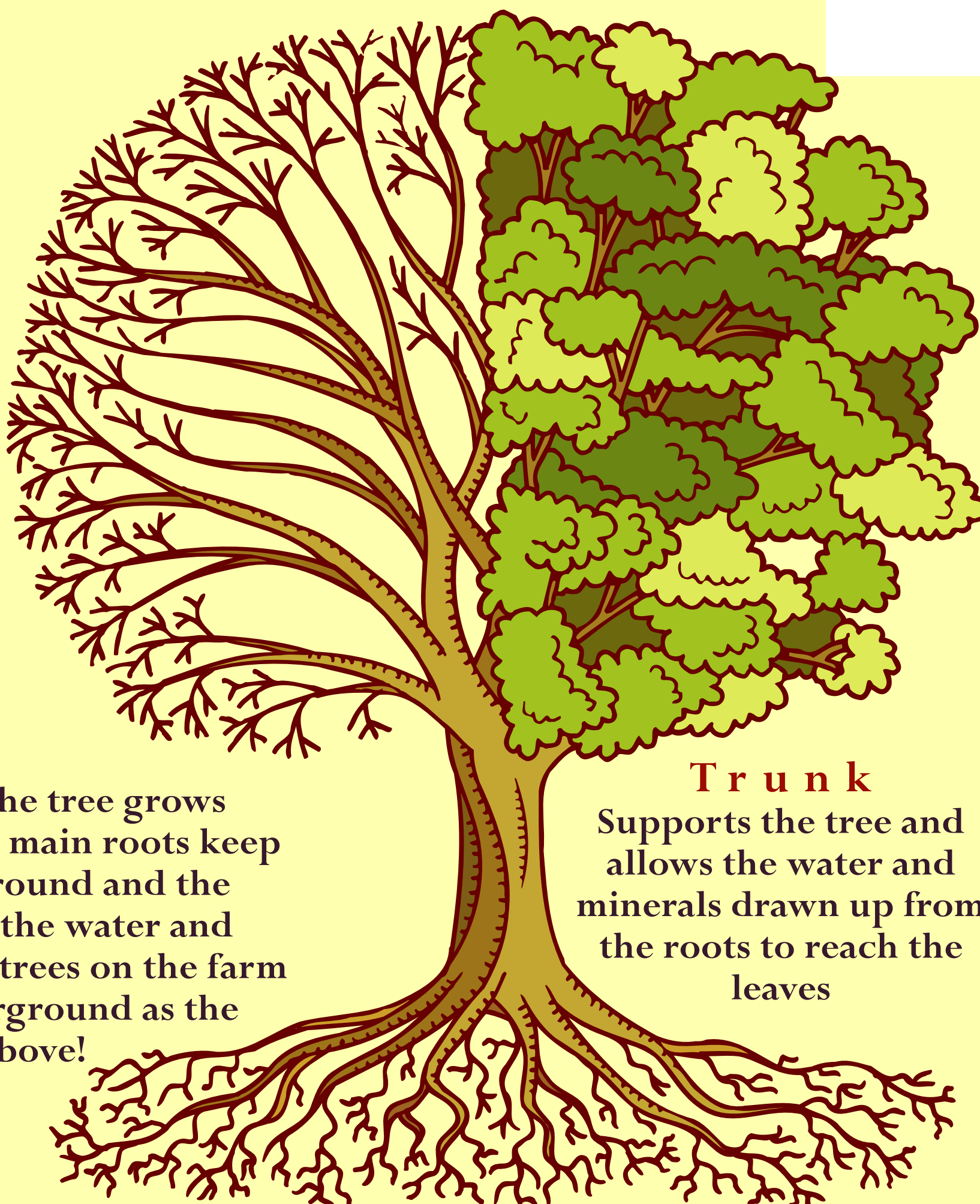
Carry water and minerals to the leaves and ensure the leaves are in the sunlight

Bark

Is the natural armour and protects the tree from threats. Also, 'tubes' in the bark called phloem transport the nutrients throughout the tree

Roots

Believe it or not, more of the tree grows underground than above! The main roots keep the tree anchored in the ground and the smallest finer roots take in the water and minerals. The roots of the oak trees on the farm will spread out as far underground as the branches spread above!



Trunk

Supports the tree and allows the water and minerals drawn up from the roots to reach the leaves

Leaves

Through a process called photosynthesis, leaves absorb sunlight and air to create glucose and lignin the materials the tree needs to grow. Trees that lose their leaves in the autumn are called deciduous and those that keep them evergreen

Every year of its life, the tree produces a new ring – have a look at the tree stump here and work out how old the tree was when it was cut

Trees around the Farm

The woodland around here derives from man's activities in the past. Three hundred or more years ago, the whole of this part of Kent was covered in well managed forest of Oak, Chestnut, Ash and more that provided the timber to build homes, palaces and most importantly the ships of our navy that so famously beat the Spanish Armada.

As you will see in our woods, large standard trees like Oaks were planted amongst trees that could be coppiced like Sweet Chestnut (see panel in The Interpretation Lodge for information about coppicing) The coppice trees would be 'harvested' every 5-7 years on a rotation to provide materials for fencing and building and most importantly charcoal.

Charcoal burns very, very hot and provided the fuel for metal working. Hundreds of years ago this area was the centre for iron production in the country.

The trees in our woods were used for different purposes as different woods have different properties and characteristics ...

- *Oak for strong, long lasting planks and beams – oak framed houses built hundreds of years ago are still lived in today!*
- *Chestnut, Hazel and Willow for coppicing to make fences, posts, charcoal, baskets and hurdles. Willow is still used today for making artist charcoal*
- *Hornbeam for strong, heavy ploughs, yokes and handles (It was the favoured wood for making yokes to link the oxen used for ploughing – quite literally the beam that linked the horns!)*
- *Ash was split for making the wattle walls of ancient houses (look for the wattles in this Lodge)*

In the years to come, we hope to restore the woods to their former glory and to begin to work them as they would have in the past. You'll see in the woods by the Lake that we have already started coppicing



Grow your own forest ...

Next time you're walking in the woods during the Autumn why not gather some acorns, conkers or chestnuts, plant them in some compost, keep them moist and given time you'll be on your way to growing your very own wood!