



International Day of Forests

The One Earth Festival of Trees 2018

Theme: Trees and Sustainable Cities

24 March 2018

The International Day of Forests

The United Nations General Assembly on 21 December 2012 declared that 21 March of each year is to be observed as the International Day of Forests, to raise awareness of the importance of forests to people and their vital role in poverty eradication, environmental sustainability, and food security. Sustainable management of all types of forests are at the heart of unlocking challenges of conflict-affected, developing and developed countries, for the benefit of current and future generations.

Trees and Sustainable Cities

The importance of trees to urban environments

Urban trees and forests contribute in making cities socio-economically and environmentally more sustainable by mitigating some of the negative impacts and social consequences of urbanization, thus making cities more resilient to these changes. With a unique ability to trap atmospheric pollutants in their leaves and barks and a capacity to absorb an average 150 kg of carbon dioxide annually, trees are critical in controlling urban pollution and mitigating climate change. Moreover, trees can cool the air by nearly 8 degrees Celsius, reducing the urban “heat island” effect, and help urban communities adapt to the effects of climate change.

Trees are vital in increasing urban biodiversity, ensuring food and nutrition security, and enhancing the aesthetic value of cities. They are of immense value to human health. Besides, improving the air quality, which is especially important in cities with high level of pollution, close proximity to urban green spaces are proven to have positive impact on physical and mental health by reducing blood pressure and stress. The diverse role of trees in maintaining the balance of the natural ecosystem is visible in their role regulating water flow, in turn, playing a key role in preventing floods and reducing the risk of natural disasters.

Throughout their lifetime, trees can thus provide a benefit package worth two to three times more than the investment made in planting and caring for them.

For more information: <http://www.fao.org/international-day-of-forests/en/>

The One Earth Urban Arboretum

Situated at the MJF Centre, Moratuwa, the One Earth Urban Arboretum houses a wide spectrum of flora, from trees to shrubs, as well as a model Weva or an irrigation tank (reservoir), a paddy field and

a traditional agricultural and household resource centre. Through this tangible depiction of natural forests and of Sri Lankan agricultural traditions in the recent past, Dilmah Conservation aims to educate and inform urban populations as well as the younger generation, on the value of trees to our society and our future existence.

Contest Rules

1. The photography contest is open to participants in the following age groups only:
 - **Group 1:** 12 to 16 years
 - **Group 2:** 17 to 20 years
2. The photographs should conceptualize the theme **“Trees and Sustainable Cities”** and highlight the importance of trees to urban environments.
3. Each participant must send only one entry. The photograph must be accompanied with a short caption explaining how the photograph conveys the importance of trees to cities. (word limit 75).
4. Submissions must be mailed to info@dilmahconservation.org before 19.03.2018, with the subject line **“Dilmah Conservation Photography -Your Name”** with your **name, age, school, contact number, facebook name, along with the caption.**
5. **Entries will close on 19.03.2018.**
6. Digital manipulation that distorts the reality of the images will not be allowed. Only basic enhancements such as sharpening, contrast adjustment, or simple cropping, or effects/filters made available by phone applications, will be allowed.
7. The winner in each category will be awarded prizes worth LKR 10,000.
8. Judges will determine the winner, that will be announced on the 24th of March during the **“One Earth Festival of Trees 2018”**.