

ONE BILLION TREES IN 2007!

That's UNEP's aim. Supported by star planters including Nobel laureate Wangari Maathai, UNEP's Plant for the Planet: The Billion Tree Campaign challenges nations, corporations, civil-society organizations, communities and ordinary people – *that's you and me*. Each tree will help save our soils, keep our freshwater fresh, absorb carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, and encourage other plant and animal life... making the world a better place.

Visit www.unep.org/billiontreecampaign to register your individual pledge – or a pledge from your school, college, youth or friendship group. It also provides practical advice on what to plant – indigenous species and the right kind of species for your local conditions – how to plant, when to plant, and how to care for your trees.

And, through the site, you'll be able to track the campaign's progress, post photos of you in action, and keep in touch with what others are achieving.

www.unep.org/billiontreecampaign



Play your part...
join us and
get planting.

Editorial

We are people of the trees – and not just because our distant ancestors lived in them. We could not survive without them. They protect us from nature's fury and our own follies. Up in the mountains, wooded watersheds regulate the water supplies of a third of the people on Earth. Down on the coasts, mangrove forests protect the land against storms and tsunamis as well as providing nurseries for fish. And all trees everywhere help soak up carbon dioxide that would otherwise speed up global warming.

Yet ever since humanity began to till the land, we have treated trees like enemies, not friends. They were in the way, taking up land that could be used for growing crops or building settlements. Worse, they seemed to

harbour witches and wild beasts, and could give cover to crooks or warriors seeking to attack. So from the earliest times they were cut down: half of the wildwood that once covered 80 per cent of Britain was cleared by the time the Anglo-Saxons conquered England in the 5th century.

In recent decades this has begun to rebound on us. Cleared watersheds have caused water supplies to dry up, and allowed rain to run off the mountainsides, causing massive floods. Mangroves grubbed up to make way for fish farms or tourist playgrounds have exposed people to the violence of the sea. And burning forests release carbon dioxide, making the climate change faster and more severely.

Yet some people never took the destructive approach. Still in the forest, indigenous cultures have learned to make a living from their environment without damaging it; these people clearly have much to teach us about how

to live in harmony with the environment. Our generation must abandon the confrontational attitude towards the forest and learn from the wisdom of indigenous cultures. Otherwise the outlook for our remaining forests – and for us – is bleak indeed.



We want to hear from you – your views, your news and your ideas.
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