

## Wider application

Two aspects of the *Forest Floor* initiative deserve repeating. The first is the temporary use of resources for tree-seedling nurseries. While there may be few locations with all the characteristics of the *CREATE* building's top floor, many equally secure situations can offer two or three years of intensive use.

The second is the value of a professionally run facility for fostering the seedling trees propagated by the wider community. Seed harvesting, potting and germination are inspiring activities, are relatively straightforward and achievable by people of almost any age or ability. By contrast, the next stage of production, whilst seedlings grow into saplings, takes time and dedication, and benefits from professional support, such as that provided at the *Forest Floor*.

## Further information

### National Urban Forestry Unit

This leaflet is one of a series produced by the National Urban Forestry Unit. NUFU is a charitable trust and it provides a national focus for the exchange of information and good practice in urban forestry. If you would like further information on other case studies, or if you have examples of good practice to share, please contact:

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<b>Wolverhampton WV10 9RT</b>	<b>Website:</b> <a href="http://www.nufu.org.uk">www.nufu.org.uk</a>

### BTCV

BTCV is the largest organisation in the United Kingdom promoting practical conservation work by volunteers. For more information on its work in and around Bristol, please contact:

**BTCV, CREATE Centre, B-Bond Warehouse, Smeaton Road, BRISTOL BS1 6XN**  
**Tel: +44 (0)117 929 1624, Fax: +44 (0)117 929 7283, Email: [avon@btcv.org.uk](mailto:avon@btcv.org.uk), Website: [www.btcv.org.uk](http://www.btcv.org.uk)**  
or for information about BTCV nationally or to find the nearest local contact:  
**BTCV, Conservation Centre, 163 Balby Road, DONCASTER DN4 0RH**  
**Tel: +44 (0)1302 572200, Fax: +44 (0)1302 310167, Email: [information@btcv.org.uk](mailto:information@btcv.org.uk), Website: [www.btcv.org.uk](http://www.btcv.org.uk)**

For information about *The Tree Life Centre*, contact:

**Forest of Avon Tree Life Centre, Blaise Castle Kitchen Garden, Henbury Road, BRISTOL BS10 7QS**  
**Telephone / fax: +44 (0)117 9506333**

### Further reading

**Aldhous J (1994) *Forest Nursery Practice*** Forestry Commission Bulletin 111, HMSO, London  
**BTCV (2001) *Tree Planting and Aftercare*** BTCV, Doncaster  
**Gordon A G (1982) *Seed Manual for Ornamental Trees and Shrubs*** Forestry Commission Bulletin 059, HMSO, London  
**Gordon A G (1992) *Seed Manual for Forests*** Forestry Commission Bulletin 083, HMSO, London  
**National Urban Forestry Unit (2000) *Linking trees, people and environmental action on a local and national scale*** Urban forestry in practice case study 16, National Urban Forestry Unit, Wolverhampton  
**Stokes J et al (2001) *The Good Seed Guide: All you need to know about growing trees from seed*** The Tree Council, London

Further information on the *Trees of Time and Place* campaign can be found at [www.totap.org.uk](http://www.totap.org.uk)

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# Urban Forestry in Practice

## Creating a temporary tree nursery



CASE STUDY 39

# Creating a temporary tree nursery

## Introduction

A period of two growing seasons is long enough to produce usable stock of most native tree species, which means that a tree production nursery can make very effective use of temporarily available space. Harvesting local seeds and growing young trees are good ways of involving people in environmental action and individuals with a wide range of mental and physical abilities find it relatively easy to contribute.

## Specific example

### Project name and location

The **FOREST FLOOR**, CREATE Centre, **BRISTOL**, UK  
Grid reference: ST 568721

### Project partners

- Avon & West Wiltshire Mental Healthcare Trust
- Bristol City Council - Environment & Leisure
- Bristol Water
- BTCV
- Local Schools
- Princes Trust Volunteers
- Thames Water
- Trees of Time and Place Campaign

### Project description



The *Forest Floor* is a community tree nursery inside a building. CREATE (Community Recycling Environment Arts) is Bristol City Council's environment centre. It utilises a former bonded tobacco warehouse in Bristol's dockland, and houses over 20 organisations that operate across a broad spectrum of sustainable activities. The voluntary sector and private business are well represented and the centre also includes the City Council *Local Agenda 21* team as well as other representatives from relevant council departments. The building is the office base for BTCV in Bristol where five staff and numerous volunteers organise practical conservation projects throughout the former county of Avon.

From January 1998 to March 2001, the *Trees of Time and Place (ToTaP)* officer was also based here. The *ToTaP* campaign successfully promoted the benefits of trees to the wider public - especially through the activity of collecting tree seeds, growing and planting trees

Over 10 000 tree seedlings were grown on the top floor of the CREATE centre between 1998 and 2001. Seeds were collected and grown by BTCV volunteers and schoolchildren, as well as groups of adults and children with learning difficulties or mental health problems. The *Forest Floor* provided a secure and successful temporary nursery where seedlings could be cared for until they were large enough for planting back into the community.

The top floor has an industrial 'saw tooth' roof, glazed to the north elevation with reasonable levels of natural light. This was identified by BTCV's *ToTaP* co-ordinator as suitable for an indoor tree nursery in July 1999, and the concept of the *CREATE Forest Floor* was proposed. Bristol City Council staff were supportive throughout. Seed collection and sowing began that autumn and by late March 2000, the first shoots could be seen and concerns over low light levels were allayed. Indeed the light regime is similar to that found on a 'real' forest floor and natural light levels were boosted by fixing reflective material on the unglazed elevation of each roof light.

CREATE occupies an imposing redundant bonded warehouse which is a well-known landmark in Bristol. The Forest Floor tree nursery occupied the top floor for two years



The Forest Floor was designed to make visits by school children and others a memorable and enjoyable learning experience

### Other features of the project

- The seedling trees were grown in a mixture of 50% waste sand, recycled from Bristol Water's filter beds, and 50% peat-free *Terra Ecosystems* compost, donated by Thames Water
- Plant pots were donated by the general public and Bristol City Council's contract services department
- Poor ventilation caused some fungal disease problems amongst the seedlings, but the top floor of the warehouse was adapted to provide a through draught and the seeds and seedlings had the benefit of being virtually vermin free
- Rainwater was harvested from the roof for irrigation

### Results

10 000 seedling trees were successfully grown from seeds gathered locally by BTCV volunteers and schoolchildren over a period of two growing seasons. A great many different individuals and special groups with learning difficulties or mental health problems were able to make a very effective contribution and an otherwise redundant floor of the CREATE centre was given a very productive use.

The project attracted a great deal of positive publicity at local and regional level, helped to strengthen the partnership between the public, private and voluntary sectors and in 2001 the *Forest Floor* won a national award from the *Trees of Time and Place* campaign, as an exemplary project for the new millennium.

Following the success of the *Forest Floor*, when both the *ToTaP* campaign and the availability of the top floor of the CREATE Centre came to an end, the Forest of Avon transplanted the concept to the vacant vegetable garden of Blaise Castle in Bristol, where they have now established the *Tree Life Centre*. The same principles of local harvesting and community-based production have provided a new nursery of 20 000 trees for planting by local people across Bristol and the surrounding area.