

With
lift-the-flaps
and fun
tree facts!

A Field Guide to

Leaflings

GUARDIANS of the TREES

Owen Churcher &
Niamh Sharkey





A TEMPLAR BOOK

First published in the UK in 2021 by Templar Books,
an imprint of Bonnier Books UK,
The Plaza, 535 King's Road, London, SW10 0SZ
Owned by Bonnier Books,
Sveavägen 56, Stockholm, Sweden
www.templar.co.uk
www.bonnierbooks.co.uk

Text and illustrations copyright © 2021 by Niamh Sharkey and Owen Churcher
Design copyright © 2021 by Templar Books

1 3 5 7 9 10 8 6 4 2

All rights reserved

ISBN 978-1-78342-522-8

This book was typeset in Booked Martin and Aunt Mildred
The illustrations were created with watercolour
and ink and digitally finished

Edited by Katie Haworth
Designed by Genevive Webster
Production by Nick Read

Printed in China



A Field Guide to Leaflings



Guardians of the trees

Owen Churcher & Niamh Sharkey





A Field Guide to Leaflings

There is a secret world, an ancient world, a world populated with the most magnificent giants and curious creatures – some so small that they could pass through the eye of a needle.

It is a magical world, and yet to enter it is quite simple, for the true magic of the world is hidden in plain sight. Its giants are known well to us: trees. But few humans have seen the guardians of these trees – leaflings. Most have been children, for to see them you need keen eyes, to hear them, sharp hearing and, most importantly, you need a mind that is still open to all of the world's possibilities.

We first came across leaflings as children and we've seen and heard all kinds; for each species of tree has its own unique leaflings.

One leafling has been with us from the very start – a pippin-apple-tree leafling named Flann. Since we met Flann he has been a companion on our adventures at home and as we travelled the world.

We wrote this *Field Guide to Leaflings* and their trees so that others might notice this world: how wondrous it is, but also how fragile. So that, with the leaflings' help, readers can learn more about trees and together we can see them thrive.

If the leaflings have taught us one thing it is that no one is too small to make a difference.

A NOTE ON THE DRAWINGS

Leaflings are quite impossible to take a photograph of, and what use is a field guide without pictures?

I've illustrated the guide instead, as the leaflings seem to have gotten used to me and my paint pots. I sometimes wonder if the Keeper Leaflings are busy too, drawing me.

NS

Niamh & Owen
and Flann



Meet the Leaflings

Here are some of the leaflings we've met so far, leaflings from all over the world. It's possible to tell what kind of tree a leafling belongs to based on the leafling's appearance. Leaflings, you see, have roles within a tree, similar to those of bees in a hive. Can you guess which trees these leaflings are the guardians of?



Sakura

Nowhere is more famous for its cherry blossom than Japan, where the trees are considered sacred.

There is even a TV forecast to predict when the cherry trees will bloom each spring (not that leaflings watch TV of course). But people all over Japan wait for the bloom to arrive, and when it does, they gather together under the sakura for *hanami* (the viewing of sakura); and for a traditional picnic at which they eat, drink, dance, sing and celebrate life. While they do this, the trees are celebrating too.

Leading up to the bloom, there is a festive atmosphere among many leaflings, but Blossom Leaflings like Aimi and Hachi have a lot of work to do. They must keep their blossoms looking and smelling their best to attract bees and butterflies, who come to the flowers to feed on their sweet nectar.

Bees and butterflies are pollinators. Pollen sticks to their bodies when they visit flowers, and they carry it with them from one tree to another. Pollinators help plants make seeds.

Busy leaflings, busy bees!

A leafling's work is never done.

All Blossom Leaflings are competitive: their tree's flowers must look and smell exquisite. But for a cherry tree's Blossom Leaflings? Well let's just say the standards are through the canopy!

Most Japanese cherry trees, or sakura, live a short life (16-20 years) but one that is full of colour and drama. They grow to somewhere between 5-12 metres tall.



Blossoms away!

CLICK HERE

Once the blossom starts to fall and scatter, the leaflings take time to visit their neighbours and friends in other trees.

People are a little sad to see the bloom end - but there is always next year to look forward to.

Link leaflings work hard during the bloom, keeping the wood wide and open, so that their trees are able to speak with others far and wide.

CLICK HERE

Holly

Small, even for leaflings, the guardians of the holly tree can be difficult to find, and hard to get to know.

They are often as prickly as their tree. But don't let that stop you. Just like the holly trees' bright red berries, these leaflings are colourful creatures.

The holly is an understorey tree. This means that it usually grows underneath the canopy (tree-top layer) of a forest. It can live for up to 300 years and reaches a typical height of 15 metres.



Egg

Leaf eaters come in all sizes. Some are as small as the leaflings themselves. The holly blue butterfly is one such creature. Its entire life cycle revolves around the holly tree. Minder Leaflings watch over them at every stage:

Caterpillar

Pupa

Butterfly

It might seem like the holly tree gives, and gets nothing in return. But butterflies do their share, carrying pollen from one plant to another.

Naughty birds need to share!

Etain is a minder leafling. Between birds nesting in the branches and small mammals like hedgehogs hibernating among the dropped leaves Etain is one busy leafling.

The holly is evergreen, keeping its leaves throughout the year. In winter, its berries give animals like the robin food in the cold months.

Oak King

The Celts believed that two kings ruled the forest. The kings were known as the Oak King and the Holly King. The Oak King ruled in summer and the Holly King ruled in winter. The Oak King was a sun god and the Holly King was a god of the underworld. The Oak King was a god of the sun and the Holly King was a god of the underworld. The Oak King was a god of the sun and the Holly King was a god of the underworld.

Holly King

CLICK HERE

Iarla is a Keeper Leafling. As well as its stories, Iarla can tell you the many names by which his tree is known. These include Cullraun (Irish) and Bein-Niar (Norwegian).

Christmas Tree is the name Iarla is most proud of, for the holly tree has long been associated with Christmas. Its scarlet berries and glossy leaves make it perfect for decorating homes.

FLANN NOTE

And the animals and birds that eat the berries! Do they give back? Well yes, they do. Their creatures make a gift of their poo! 'The trees' seeds are in the fruit, so young trees often grow out of animals' poo - a rich fertiliser!

Kapok

There is nowhere in the world with more trees than the Amazon rainforest.

Almost 400 billion trees live there; trees that come in all shapes and sizes. Just think how many different leaflings must live there too!



Hugo is a giant in leafling terms, but Hugo lives in the kapok trees, a giant among giants. It can grow at the breathtaking speed of 4 meters a year, until it rises high above the forest canopy.

The kapok gets more **SUNSHINE**, more **WIND**, and as Hugo will tell you, more **FOOD** than smaller trees. Hugo is a Spark Leafling and he spends most of his time high above the ground soaking up the sunlight... or being battered by wind and rain.



How many crochets can you find living in the kapok?



Photosynthesis

This is the process by which trees make food using the energy of the sun.

Most of the action takes place in the crown - the treetop - where the leaves, which make the plant's food, are found.

Water is absorbed through the tree's roots, and travels to the tree's crown in special tubes.

The tree's leaves absorb sunlight, and carbon dioxide from the air.

They use chlorophyll, the pigment that makes plants green, to convert them into glucose.

Glucose is a kind of sugar that feeds the tree, and in the process of making it, the tree releases oxygen - something leaflings and humans can't live without.

Pong!

Blossom Leaflings in the kapok have the rather unusual job of sucking up the tree's flower sticks.



That's right! even though the flowers look pretty, they smell pretty stinky. But to help they smell good and they come to the blossoms at night, carrying pollen from other trees.

The leaves of epiphytes (plants that grow on other plants) collect rainwater, in which tree frog tadpoles swim.



Juana

Juana is a Spider Leafling. Leaflings like to dip their toes in the water too, and the tadpoles don't seem to mind.

CLICK HERE

CLICK HERE



When... I'm feeling a little sleepy.



Kapok blossoms become pods with hundreds of seeds on sticky fibres inside. Blossom leaflings release the seeds to be carried far and wide on the wind.



Some species of kapok have thorns to protect the tree from thirsty life animals climbing up to eat its thin bark. Creep! These prickles are no joke!



Leaflings for All Seasons

For leaflings, each season comes with its own tasks.

Autumn

In autumn the days start to shorten and the temperature drops. Spark Leaflings store the nutrients from the leaves to feed the tree over winter. The leaves change colour and then drop. Blossom Leaflings like *Eliza* wait for the storms, shaking them loose from the oak's branches.

Spring

In spring the tree comes to life. Buds and then leaves start to unfurl. Everywhere, there is new growth. First the oak produces catkins, the male flowers. These catkins are full of pollen grains. Later in the spring, oak trees produce female flowers. If the pollen from a catkin lands on the female flower of another oak tree, it will fertilise it and produce an acorn.

Spring is the busiest time of the year for a Blossom Leafling like *Florence*.

Winter

In the coldest season, the oak is bare of leaves and doesn't catch the wind as much, so its branches can hold out against snow and ice. To survive the winter, the oak needs to use as little energy as possible. But there's still plenty going on. The tree provides shelter for all sorts of creatures, like spiders and woodlice, bats and owls. Minder Leaflings like *Dash* have too much work to hibernate like some creatures.

Summer

The oak is in full leaf and its branches are drooping with their weight. But summer isn't all fun and games. Hundreds of insect species view the oak simply as dinner, and it is up to Shield Leaflings like *Mary* to curb their appetite. Summer is a time of plenty for trees: pollen is spread far and wide, flowering trees bloom and fruit trees bear fruit like cherries and apples.

For leaflings, each season has its own beauty. So too does the magnificent oak tree as it is transformed each autumn, winter, spring and summer.

Deciduous means to fall off, and each of the 700,000 leaves on this oak tree will be shed at the end of the growing season.

Evergreen trees do not lose their leaves all at once, and keep a good covering throughout the year.

Scots Pine

Conifers like the Scots Pine don't flower. Instead of being inside a fruit, the winged seeds are found in pine cones. The cones open when the weather is warm and the seeds stand a good chance of sprouting.

Greetings from
NORWAY

Not all oak wood wide from all over where quite different.

Sale travels, leaf letters.

Tree mail!

Hullo.



Green Streets

Our cities are abuzz with energy. There's always something going on, and there are so many interesting people trees, and leaflings to meet.

More and more of us live in towns and cities, but we still need to connect with nature. Trees are essential to our well-being.

Trees make the air we breathe in our cities cleaner, removing carbon dioxide from it, and storing the gas in their trunks, branches and leaves. A single mature tree can absorb around 22 kilograms of carbon dioxide a year, and release enough oxygen to support a human for four months.

The shade from the crowns of mature trees can also have a cooling effect on our cities, some of which are hotspots and prone to dangerous heat waves.

It's normal for there to be carbon dioxide in our air, but too much is bad news for us all. Carbon dioxide is a greenhouse gas, which means it stops the heat from the sun leaving the Earth's atmosphere. Over time this leads to global warming. Burning fossil fuels in cars, planes and power stations produces lots of carbon dioxide.

Cities are not a natural environment for trees. They miss the forest, and their relatives. Their nearest neighbours might be a bus or train ride away. Trees can't take buses or ride trains, but leaflings can. Urban leaflings love to travel by bus, rail or tram, to catch up with trees and leaflings in other neighbourhoods. Keep an eye out for them.

Famous City Trees

There are some remarkable trees in our cities, and wherever there are remarkable trees, there are remarkable leaflings.

Meet some famous city trees!

Get to know your neighbourhood leaflings!

Can you imagine cities of the future, designed as much with trees in mind, as humans?

The Hungry Tree, Dublin



In Dublin, there is a tribe of leaflings we called the Hungry Leaflings. The leaflings themselves aren't any more hungry than other leaflings we've met, but their tree - a London plane tree - looks like it has eaten a park bench, absorbing the seat into its trunk, as it has grown more rotund.

The Upside-Down Fig, Bacoli



Another tribe of leaflings, the Upside-downers, hang like bats from their fig tree in Bacoli, close to Naples, Italy. The strange fig rooted itself on the ceiling of an ancient Roman arch, and instead of growing upwards it grows towards the ground.

The Dinosaur, New York



The 300-year-old elm is one of the oldest trees in Manhattan and is known as the Dinosaur. In 1776 the first President of the United States, George Washington, is said to have watched the Battle of Washington Heights from beneath it. There are leaflings living there now who watched George Washington watching the battle.

FLANN NOTE

Some humans love trees almost as much as we leaflings. An Italian architect named Stefano Boeri has turned skyscrapers into vertical forests. Two of these towers in Milan are packed with 200 trees. In the future, cities and forests might have a lot more in common. Leaflings are moving in, and up!

Baobab

In Africa, the baobab tree is known as the 'tree of life', and baobab leaflings know a thing or two about surviving. They are among the longest lived leaflings on Earth.

There are six species of baobabs on the island of Madagascar, off the coast of East Africa. Nya's tree is a Grandidier's baobab, and it is one of the trees that line Madagascar's famous Avenue of Baobabs.

Baobab leaflings are tough customers, and their trees are tough too, made to withstand drought, fire and locusts. But there are modern threats to their survival, especially the clearing of forests for farmland.

The baobab tree is a native of Madagascar and West and Southern Africa. It is the largest succulent plant in the world, reaching up to 30 metres. It can live for up to 5,000 years.



A Tree of Stories

With its strange upside-down appearance, great strength and size, is it any wonder the baobab is at the heart of so many African legends?

Trees in Love



Isitsi

The Hyena and the Baobab

A tale from Senegal has it that long ago a hyena and a baobab tree were in love. The hyena would bring the baobab a gift of meat every day, and the baobab would give the hyena a gift of shade every day. But one day the hyena was out hunting and did not bring a gift. The baobab was angry and decided to punish the hyena. So the baobab turned its trunk upside down, and the hyena was left with no shade.

Mouse lemurs do have very large and peculiar eyes - spooky! Not to leaflings though.

The blossom leaflings on the Madagascar baobabs have their work cut out unfurling the tree's fast-long flowers, and they must work at night, because the baobab is pollinated by nocturnal mouse lemurs, bats and moths.

Madagascar is home to about half the world's species of chameleons. Just like a chameleon Nya, a Minder Leafling, is an expert at blending in.

FLANN NOTE

'The Latin 'lemur' means ghost and in Madagascar lemurs are associated with spirits - perhaps because they are active at night.'

Tāne Mahuta is the biggest living kauri tree and has a crown that's over 35 metres wide. Tāne Māhuta means 'Lord of the Forest' in the Māori language.

Kauri trees are native to New Zealand. These conifers can grow up to 45 metres tall, and are among the most ancient trees on the planet.



One after another the birds refused.

For the Kōwhiri, the earth was too dark, too cold - No!

For the Pukeko the earth was too cold, too damp - No!

The pūkeko was too wrapped up with building its nest - No!

When it came to its turn, the kiwi answered - yes! It would go to the forest floor and protect Tāne-mahuta's children, the trees, and in doing so, the kiwi lost the power of flight.

The North Island brown kiwi is a resident of Waipoua Forest. The kiwi is a flightless bird with big feet, a long beak, small wings and fur-like feathers. It holds a special place in the heart of healings, and in Māori culture.

Time Mahuta gets a great deal of attention. But as long as the visiting humans remain on the boardwalk, Tui doesn't mind. The karri has shallow feeder roots that are easily damaged.

In the same forest lives Te Matau Ngarohi. Its Māori name means Father of the Forest. It is thought to be between 2,500 and 3,000 years old and could be the oldest tree in New Zealand.

The red river gum grows everywhere in Australia except Tasmania. Eucalyptus trees are known as gum trees because they bleed a thick, gooey substance if their bark is broken.

There are over 700 species of eucalyptus trees of which most like the red river gum, are native only to Australia. This tree likes to grow along riverbanks and floodplains. It reaches heights of 20-40 metres and can live for 500-1,000 years.



It's morning on the Murrumbidgee River, and Jeddo is directing leafing traffic while the koalas have breakfast. For creatures that sleep for 22 out of 24 hours, koalas sure have a good appetite.

G'day! You
up early.

Marsupials
like koalas and kangaroos have a pouch inside of which they carry and nurse their young.

Leaper leafhoppers have
learned a lot from
squirrel gliders

These nocturnal
poorwills can glide 60
metres in one leap. They
use the thin membrane of
skin between their wrist
and ankle just like a
bat's glider.

Gum trees
are very
important
to koolas.
Eucalyptus
leaves are all the
eat, and they can
rarely leave the
tree's branches

Murrumbidgee means big water. Red river game need water, not just from rain, but from flooding as well, as it recharges the soil. The game healings take a dip in a local swimming hole to recharge too.

Come on in
the water's
perfect.

Yahoo!

Eucalyptus trees had to adapt in order to survive Australia's bushfires. Some actually need fire to melt the resin with which their cones are sealed and release the seeds inside. Global warming means that bushfires are wilder, and more dangerous – even to eucalypts.

Coast & Giant Redwood

Standing tall, redwood or sequoia leaflings seem to look down on the leaflings of other trees. Even the leaflings of the coast and giant redwood can be standoffish with one another.

Both tribes are impressive, but coast redwood leaflings are the tallest leaflings of all.

Being giants in leafling terms, you'd think the redwood leaflings wouldn't be hard to spot. Well, think again; in trees so tall, it's easy to hide.

Ah, there you are, Flann. I almost tripped over you!



How's the weather up there?



Leaf



Coast redwood grow along the Pacific coast of North America, while giant redwood are found in the Sierra Nevada mountain range, 300 kilometres to the east. Both conifers grow to heights of 90 metres and more and can live for thousands of years. Coast and giant redwoods are named for their pinkish-red wood. They are also called sequoia trees.

The tallest tree on Earth, a coast redwood, grows in Redwoods National and State Park, California, but its exact location is kept secret. It was discovered in 2006 and is named Hyperion. It stands a whopping 116.07 metres tall - about six storeys taller than the Statue of Liberty.

Walking among these great trees as the fog rolls in, it can feel like you're alone. Of course, there are leaflings above you, but the redwood forests are a habitat for all sorts of other creatures, though they can be a little shy.

CLICK HERE

Hoo-hoo
Hoo-hoo

It's thought to be 600-800 years old - not so very old for a redwood: there is a giant redwood known as the President that is around 3,200 years old.

Combin layer
This produces bark and expands so that the tree grows wider.

Outer bark
This thick layer acts like a shield.

Inner bark or phloem
This moves sugar from the leaves to the rest of the tree.

Heartwood
Found at the center of the tree. This is old wood, and it makes the tree stable and strong.

Sapwood
This delivers water from the roots to the rest of the tree.

Each ring shows a year of growth. How old is this tree?

Hoo-hoo
Hoo-hoo

Peepal

The peepal is a strangler fig. It often begins life as an epiphyte, growing on another tree.

As it gets bigger its roots extend down to the earth, forming a trunk. It will eventually kill its host tree.

Native to many parts of Asia, the peepal tree goes by many names: Bo, badi, and sacred fig to name but a few. It can reach heights of 18-30 metres and typically lives for 900-1,500 years. Peepal comes from the ancient Indian language, Sanskrit.



Each species of fig needs a unique species of fig wasp to pollinate it. Without this partnership, neither wasp nor tree would survive. Wasps hatch from eggs inside the fig, where males stay all their lives. Females travel to other fig flowers, pollinating them in the process. The relationship between fig wasp and figs is ancient - perhaps as much as 80 million years old.

There's more to those figs than meets the eye.



Dey is a Blossom Leafling. The peepal bears a false fruit - the fig. You see, a fig isn't quite what it seems. It isn't a single piece of fruit, but a collection of tiny flowers inside a soft shell.

In Sri Lanka, there is a badi tree, the Jaya Sri Maha Badi, said to have been grown from a branch of the original tree under which the Buddha attained enlightenment. Monks have cared for this tree for more than 2,000 years. The leaflings of the Jaya Sri Maha Badi know just how much humans can do to protect the trees in our world, if they put their minds to it.

Namaste.



Huangshan Pine

Of all the leaflings we've come across, those of the Huangshan (Yellow Mountain) pine in eastern China are the most elusive.

The most famous of the Huangshan pines is the Guest Greeting Pine. The Greeting Pine seems to be opening its branches wide in welcome to pilgrims. It has become a national symbol of hospitality.

Cloud leopards

are expert climbers, and even this cub is no slouch when it comes to scaling a Huangshan pine. Leaflings aren't on the big cats' menu, but still get a bit nervous - just look at those teeth! Cloud leopards have the largest canine teeth in proportion to their body size of any wild cat.

The Huangshan pine is an alpine tree that is native to eastern China. This evergreen grows to heights of 15-25 metres, and can live for over 100 years.



The Yellow Mountain has a legendary quality to it, and it's not difficult to imagine it as a land of dragons.



To reach the peaks of Huangshan, there are 60,000 steps to climb. The pines cling to rugged towers of granite, some over 1,000 metres high, that look like trolls playing hide and seek in the mist.

Yi is a Link Leafling. Being a Link Leafling on a Huangshan pine is no easy matter. The roots of the tree can extend far up to 10 times the height of the trunk.



Sweet Chestnut

The sweet chestnut thrives in Europe's mountain ranges. On Corsica, in the Mediterranean, it has a special place in the islanders' hearts.

Chestnuts have been harvested in Corsica for hundreds of years. It is traditional to roast chestnuts in a pan punctured with holes. But the nuts can also be ground into flour for bread making or cooked in their skins on an open fire. They are a traditional European Christmas food.

The sweet or Spanish chestnut is native to southern Europe, as well as parts of Africa and Asia. It can grow to 35 metres tall, and live for up to 2,000 years.

Leaf

Chestnut



FLANN NOTE

Sweet chestnut trees are believed to have been introduced to the rest of Europe from Greece, and throughout the continent there are ancient festivals celebrating the nut. People are nuts about them!

Even Minder Leafings like Roman need to be careful around the spikes of the seed cases. Once they have fallen, they open naturally on the ground to reveal a shiny chestnut or two.

Careful now!

OUCH!



Chestnuts

come wrapped in a squirrel-proof prickly pale green case. Some of them have to sprout and become seedlings one day!



The Hundred Horse Chestnut Tree

is believed to be the oldest and largest sweet chestnut in Europe. It is said the world's first chestnut was found here, a nut from the island of Sicily, Italy.

Legend has it that in a thunderstorm, the Queen of Naples and her one hundred knights took shelter along with their horses under its branches.

Just imagine how many leafings it can fit!

CLICK HERE

CLICK HERE



The sweet chestnut shouldn't be confused with the horse chestnut, which is unrelated. Horse chestnuts produce a similar nut, a conker, but it is larger.



Sweet chestnut

Conker

Deer and other mammals can eat horse chestnuts, but they are toxic to humans.



In Galicia, in

Spain's northwest, the sweet chestnut is important too, and Magosto celebrations are held each autumn to celebrate the harvest. These traditional festivities were held in a chestnut grove, with in which chestnuts were cooked on an open fire.

Chestnuts roasting on an open fire.





One last thing . . .

We are not the sole authors of this field guide. We would know nothing, or next to nothing, if not for the leaflings from all over the world who have chosen to share their stories with us. Stories that have taught us much about our connection with nature, and our place in the world.

I guess that we are go-betweens, messengers if you will, between the world of leaflings and their trees and that of people.

We have always shared a love of nature, ever since we were small children. Together we climbed trees, made forts in the long grass, caught frogs in Walt's pond, and had our own path worn through the Witch's Wood to our treehouse.



We filled our notebooks with drawings and notes on what we found, with rubbings, pressed flowers, feathers and such. I suppose it was just a matter of time before we stumbled on the leaflings. If you pay close enough attention, nature has a way of revealing its secrets to you.

The idea of putting together this field guide, of sharing what we've learned, might have remained just that, an idea, if not for Flann.

Apple tree leaflings are generally round and jovial with minds as crisp and bright as their tree's ripe fruit. Flann is all of this and more. When he wants something, nothing is going to stand in his way – but he's also enthusiastic and clever, and there's never a dull moment with him around. He has become a firm friend of ours, and if he wasn't so pushy, we might never have begun.

So, a special thank you to Flann.

You don't have to go far to find leaflings. Your own back garden is probably teeming with them. Your local park might be Leafling Central. You too can become a tree guardian, and we hope that this field guide has inspired you.

Niamh & Owen
and Flann



Children, Trees, Leaflings

Spend time around trees

Climb a tree. Sit under a tree and read a book. If it's a good book, perhaps you could read a little out loud. There's no telling who might be listening. Leaflings love a good story. What's that rustling? Leaflings sometimes shake the small branches to show their appreciation.



Use all of your senses

Remember to use all of your senses. Our sight can take us so far, but if we're tracking leaflings we need to train our other senses too. What do the trees around you smell like? How does it feel to touch the crocodile-skin bark of a juniper tree? Or the paper-thin bark of a birch? Are the trees talking, or is it the wind?



Take notice of the smaller things

Look at the life a single tree can support. So many of these creatures are small, and just a fraction of them are visible to us above ground. Under its roots a tree is abuzz with Link Leaflings going about their business, keeping everyone on the wood wide web connected.



Plant a tree

Leaflings will help nurture the newbie, and they'll stick with it as it grows up. There is no better way to befriend the leaflings.



Get to know their names

Names can be powerful things. If something has been well named, then a little of its spirit will have been caught, a hint of its true nature. Knowing the names of even those trees that grow where you live might well unlock the world of the leaflings. Think of how it feels when someone remembers your name. It can mark the beginning of a new friendship.



Listen to the bird song

Have you ever noticed how the dawn chorus begins at the crown of the tree, as the birds that are high up receive the first light of morning? The singing travels down the tree until it is wrapped from crown to roots in song. Listen, can you hear the leaflings singing along?



Listen to the wind

Something happens when you give over your attention in this way - you seem to tune into the natural world and the world of the leaflings.



Keep a nature notebook

Paint, sketch and make pencil or charcoal rubbings of the underside of leaves, and of rough tree bark. Collect seed pods. Stick fallen petals and leaves into a nature notebook. How do you think this field guide came about? Being creative opens a magic window onto the world around you.



Sharpen your sense of adventure

Television and the Internet can make the world seem small, but the opposite is true. The world is much wider than the web. Sharpen your senses. Get out there. Breathe some air.



Adventure is just around the corner.



