

## Our Fantastic Forests: Additional Ideas & Activities

### More Important Facts About Our Forests.

In groups or as a class discuss the following:

- What effect do forests have in helping the Greenhouse Effect? *Forests can play a huge part in helping to reduce the levels of carbon dioxide in our atmosphere. Trees absorb carbon dioxide from the air and replace it with oxygen. Help prevent global warming!*
- Why is sustainable logging important? *Sustainability is a good way to look after our natural resources and allows native forests to regrow and replace the timber that has been taken.*
- How can trees be considered renewable resources? *Natural resources are things that the earth supplies. They are not made by people, but people use them every day. Forests are a very important renewable natural resource.*
- How might these threats effect (native) forests? Roadworks, Weed Competition, Grazing, Agriculture, Industrial & urban development, Fire frequency, Collecting, Mining, Forestry.

### Role of Bushfires and our Native Forests

Although bushfires constantly pose a threat to Australians and their homes, vegetation and animals during the warmer months, these fires have a role in the life cycle of native Eucalypts forests.

Eucalypts produce seeds in woody fruits, which after fire are released easily to germinate. How might these seeds germinate? *Forest litter (old leaves and bark) that covers the soil has been burnt away, allowing seeds to reach the soil and germinate (begin to grow). Fires scorch or burn the crowns of trees, allowing more sunlight and rain to reach the soil.*

Also there are heaps of buds hidden underneath the bark of eucalypts, which sprout quickly after a fire has been through. These produce new shoots, which help the tree to survive, even though it has lost its leaves.

Careful forest management can reduce the effect of fire on the environment by ensuring that 'fuel' found on forest floors reduced to a level that reduces the risk of wildfires, but which is still sufficient to allow the maintenance of critical nutrient cycles for the forest. Foresters use methods such as 'prescribed burning' to keep State forests healthy and protect them from uncontrolled bushfires.

However, it is crime to deliberately light or be found to act in such a manner that causes bushfires.

### Other Activities

- Have students design posters that promote the recreational value of forests as a wonderful place to enjoy nature.
- Talk about how natural areas such as National and State Parks are visited by thousands of Australians each year and by many thousands of overseas tourists. Discuss and develop the idea of forests being very important for jobs and the local economy.
- Invite a builder to talk to the class about the many uses of pine/timber in the building industry. Label pictures of a house to indicate where wood products are likely to be used and their purpose.
- Make contact with your nearest forestry or national park office and invite a representative to speak to the students about forest conservation and management efforts in your local area. Ask if there is any way that they can help with these efforts.
- Invite a local pine plantation owner or manager to talk to the class about caring and maintaining their plantation.
- Prepare maps of significant trees – both native and non-native, in the school grounds and the local area and find out their names. Prepare notes for a tree walk that other classes and parents can take around the area.
- Have students write a report that shows they understand the importance of forests and forestry to Australia.
- Prepare illustrated talks to give to other classes to explain why we must treasure and how to conserve our native forests.