

Place names and plants – KS2

Derivation of place names from plants

Aim: Research and develop an understanding of local place names and social history derived from plants that might once have grown there.

This could work well as a precursor to history or geography fieldwork. Here are some plant derived British placenames:

- Lime... Lind... Lin... these indicate the presence of lime trees, which are still also known as lindens
- Elder: many variants from the obscure Boscawen, meaning Elder Farm (Bos=farm) or Eldersfield
- Willow, or sallo or withy: Salehurst, Welford, Withybrook
- Rose or hip: Hepworth, Hipton
- Nettle: Nettlebed, Nettleham, Nettleworth
- Wort, which means plant: Wortly, Worton



Plant place names

Anne Frank's horse chestnut tree – Symbol of Hope

Jewish history link

Aim: To empathise and appreciate why the Chestnut tree was so important for Ann Frank and relate it to their own lives.

Anne Frank's tree, mentioned in her diary, was a horse chestnut tree, in the centre of Amsterdam. Her window overlooked the tree, a symbol of hope for her. During a speech in 1968, Otto Frank described his thoughts when he read Anne's diary for the first time: *"How could I have known how much it meant to Anne to see a patch of blue sky, to observe the seagulls as they flew, and how important the chestnut tree was for her, when I think that she never showed any interest in nature. Still, she longed for it when she felt like a bird in a cage. Only the thought of the freedom of nature gave her comfort. But she kept all those feelings to herself."*

Activity:

Discuss Anne's engagement with the natural world and use the story to develop an insight into her life in hiding. Look out of a window at school: is there a tree that engages you? Write a diary passage to explain your thoughts.

History of plant hunters and scientists

Female scientists and their historical context

Aim: To know the names famous females scientists, as well as Darwin, and to be able to consider their life and times in an historical context.

The *Pappus* Science Learning springboard Famous Female Plant Hunters and Botanists provides more information.

We suggest exploring the life and works of:

- Marianne North 1830-1890
- Beatrix Potter 1866-1943
- Janaki Ammal 1897-1984
- Mary Agnes Chase 1869-1963



Female plant hunters

Venerable trees: chronology – KS2

What have they seen in their lifetime?

Aim: To understand how long trees live and create a timeline of the life of an ancient tree. To use the Internet to find stories around old trees e.g. the King James Oak.

Activity:

Chose a few trees you think are old, in your school grounds or neighbourhood. Some species live a long time - oak trees for example can live to over 1000yrs old. Others, such as birch, live for a much shorter time. Find out if you are right by working out the age of the trees.

- Find your oldest venerable tree, (and compare its features. Climate etc. to the world's oldest tree (internet research).
- Plot a timeline of the history your venerable tree has seen, working back from today.

More Springboards:

- Maths Learning Springboard: Estimating
- *Pappus* Plant ID sheets - Ash, Oak, Lime, Horse chestnut
- Literacy learning Springboard: Interview with a tree