

FAMILY FUN



Looking back in time

Fossils are the remains of life from millions of years ago that have been preserved under just the right conditions.

Scientists use these fossils to understand how plants and animals survived and adapted over millions of years.

Credit: Yorkshire Fossils



Credit: Louisa Lockwood



Fossilised trees

Can you spot these ancient trees on your next trip to Westonbirt?

✓ Monkey Puzzle

This tree was alive 200 million years ago alongside the dinosaurs! Its needles are thick, stiff, sharp and spiky, to try and stop dinosaurs eating them.

See if you can spot one at Westonbirt!

✓ Ginkgo

Fossils of leaves related to our existing ginkgo date back 270 million years. Dinosaurs such as a diplodocus would have eaten them!

Only the Ginkgo biloba is around today. It's one of the world's oldest living tree species.



Credit: Juan Carlos López



Credit: Anders Sandburg

✓ Dawn Redwood

Fossils have been found which show the dawn redwood tree dates back 100 million years! Dawn redwood forests that grew during this time would have provided shade, cover and food for dinosaurs like the triceratops!



Credit: Gina Mills



Credit: Matt Heaton

You will need:

1. Clay or Plasticine/play dough
2. Leaf
3. Rolling pin

- Roll out your clay to 1 cm thick
- Place your leaf on the clay and roll over it, gently pressing the leaf into the clay
- Carefully remove the leaf
- Allow to dry – **well done, you've made your own fossil!**

Make your own fossil

During the **Triassic** (about 251 million to 199 million years ago), **Jurassic** (199 million to 145 million years ago) and early **Cretaceous** (145 million to 65 million years ago) periods a lot of the trees that grew were conifers such as the monkey puzzle tree.

Did you know?

- **Coal is made from trees and plants that got squished under the ground millions of years ago.**
- **Most coal was made about 360 million to 290 million years ago when dinosaurs were alive.**
- **As the plants and trees died, they were covered up deep under the ground. It was really hot down there and everything got squeezed together, which changed the plant material into coal.**
- **The energy we get from burning coal is actually the energy those amazing plants stored millions of years ago.**

