



# Learning about trees

This summer we have a series of activities for young people to explore some of the amazing uses of trees. But we think it's interesting for people of all ages! So here's a little insight into just a few of the things we rely on trees for in our day-to-day lives.

**Come to one of our family events this summer to discover more about trees and have a go at our crafts, see page 7 for more information.**



## Making medicine

It is thought that one in four of our medicines have some sort of plant in them.

Plants can be found in painkillers, antibiotics, cancer drugs and anaesthetics. Yet only 5 per cent of all plants have been tested for their medicinal properties. How many more cures could there be that we don't even know about yet?

Even the humble plaster is made from up to four plants! The soft absorbent bit is often cotton, the sticky backing is a mixture of latex from the rubber tree and gum rosin from the resin of a Scots pine and the antiseptic may well be an extract of witch hazel leaves.



The plaster is made from up to 4 plants



## Fabric and fibres



- **Viscose:** Viscose (or rayon) is made of wood fibres, often from the same trees that produce wood pulp for paper. It was first invented in 1891 and was marketed as 'artificial silk'.
- **Modal:** Modal is made from spinning reconstituted cellulose from beech trees. It has a soft silky texture and is stronger than rayon, and resistant to shrinking and stiffening.
- **Rope:** Rope was a life changing invention of early man. It increased our ability to fish, hunt, build and grow crops. Many different plant materials can be used to make rope including the bark of lime trees.
- **Silk:** Without mulberry trees, silk would not exist. The silk 'worms' that produce silk cocoons are actually a species of moth caterpillar that can only eat mulberry leaves.
- **Cellulose film:** Your favourite film was probably recorded onto film made of wood pulp! Although films are delivered digitally, many directors still prefer motion picture film.

## Woodwonders...

**Birch**  
The Hughes H-4 Hercules, the largest flying boat ever built almost entirely of birch wood, despite its nickname 'The Spruce Goose'!

**Willow**  
Willow stems are flexible and strong, making them ideal for baskets of all shapes and sizes – from picnic baskets to hot air balloon baskets!

**Sweet chestnut**  
Sweet chestnut is one of the trees traditionally coppiced at Westonbirt. We use some of the sweet chestnut coppiced to make charcoal.

Discover more wood wonders, in the Old Arboretum this summer.

## Sport specialists



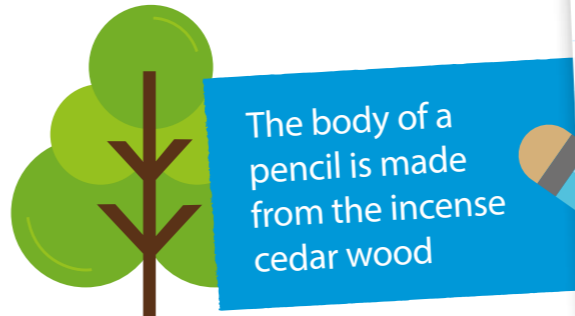
- **Table tennis:** Professional table tennis bats are made from Hinoki Cypress, native to Japan.
- **Cricket:** The bails and stumps are made of Ash. Cricket bats are made of willow. Even the inside of the ball is made of cork.
- **Velodrome:** The Olympic Velodrome track in London is made of Siberian Larch wood. Could that be Sir Chris Hoy's favourite tree?

## Paper products

About 15 per cent of the world's timber is used to make paper products!

Most paper is made from the Sitka spruce (which is also used in many musical instruments).

Lots of the products we use on paper also come from trees; the body of a pencil is made from the incense cedar wood; Crayons contain waxes from trees to help them run smoothly over the paper; and oil paints contain turpentine made from pine resins.



The body of a pencil is made from the incense cedar wood