

Tree planting at Brentry Primary School

On a cold and frosty morning on 20th January, tree experts and volunteers arrived in 2 large vans full of trees, mulch and an impressive collection of tools and kit needed for tree planting. Our main contact was self-confessed tree nerd, John Atkinson who has visited Brentry many times before, to share his incredible knowledge of trees and all things nature-related.

The morning started with John giving a fabulous assembly to KS1 students about the importance of trees to us and other living creatures. He showed us slides of some amazing trees in Bristol and around the UK, including a 4000 year-old tree in Wales, as well as some truly spectacular specimens from around the world. One tree in Mexico was so wide that it would have taken around 70 of us joining hands to reach around it! KS1 children were very keen and had lots of interesting questions. Thanks to Lucas (Year 6) for running the slide show and to Katy and Aya for taking notes in the assembly.

The rest of the day was spent with all KS2 students (plus KS1 Tree Champions) involved in the planting of over 270 trees! The aim was to increase biodiversity in our school fields to attract a whole range of living creatures including a greater diversity of insects and birds. We planted hawthorn, hazel, blackthorn, wild cherry, lime, birch, rowan, holly, crack willow, dogwood and hornbeam.

The children all worked incredibly hard and followed the tree planting instructions really well. John told us to get in pairs or small groups. We then chose a tree and went over to where the tree planting team had already put a bamboo cane (so we knew where to plant our tree). We took out the cane, dug a hole big enough for the roots and gently placed the tree in the hole. We put the soil (and any worms!) back into the hole, firmed down the soil and put the bamboo cane back in close to the tree for support. To make sure rabbits, deer and other animals do not eat the young trees, we covered the tree stems with biodegradable protectors. We then covered the base of the tree with a mat to help stop weeds from taking over our new trees. This was lastly covered by some mulch made from chopped up trees to provide goodness to our young trees. John encouraged us to name our trees, so we had fun making up unusual names. Mia (Year 6) even named a worm (Buddy!) and Lily called one of her trees the B.F.G. because it was so tall.

John and his team were lucky enough to sample our lovely school lunches (thanks to Hannah and Sue for arranging that) and sat down for a well-earned lunch and hot drink. After lunch, the Tree Champions were very fortunate to have John

