

ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS AND CARE AT ST. COMAN'S WOOD ROSCOMMON

Forest in a Box (Woodland League of Ireland)

Our 4th class pupils in Ms. Mannion's, Ms. Crean's and Ms. Kilcullen's were privileged to be participants in a 2 year project of our local native woodlands. This project is being jointly run by Roscommon County Council and the Woodland League Ireland. 4th class pupils had two workshops so far.

Workshop 1: On October 8th 2019, John Crossan, an expert in native trees delivered a really interesting and informative workshop in the GP room to begin with. Then, each of the classes were taken by bus to St. John's Wood, Lecarrow. Here, the pupils collected acorns and hazels. When the groups returned to the school, John provided instruction about the storage of the acorns and hazels. The collection was carefully placed in a black bag and stored in the school shed to be ready for step 2.

Workshop 2: Woodland League Ceo, Andrew St. Ledger spoke to the children on **27th November** about the Woodland League, the importance of looking after our native species and how all of us can play an important role in this process. The materials necessary for constructing the "Forest in a

Box” had been delivered earlier that day by Roscommon County Council.

What is “A Forest in a Box”?

Andrew St. Ledger explained that the box is a copy of the natural forest floor of leaf litter to start the trees off. The box itself is made up of wooden panels one metre x one metre. The sides create shade to encourage the trees to reach for the light with fine mesh across the bottom and the top lid to protect the seeds from being eaten, so increasing their chances of survival by 90% or more. Each one metre by one metre seed box is capable of providing approximately 200 healthy native trees for planting out every two years. The seeds are collected by the school children within a ten mile radius as it is a fact that these native trees are the most adapted to the area, and therefore the most valuable in providing Ecosystem services, such as, wildlife habitat, water filtering, soil protection and flood prevention.

The pupils retrieved the seed collection from the school shed and helped Andrew plant our fabulous “Forest in a Box”. It was carefully covered with mesh wire to prevent the seeds from being taken away by birds etc.

In 2 years time, when this group is in 6th class, we hope we will be ready to plant lots of native tree species in our locality. We at St. Coman’s Wood feel honoured to be part of such a wonderful

project. Sincere gratitude to Suzanne Dempsey of Roscommon County Council, John Crossan and Andrew St. Ledger for all their hard work.



Andrew St. Ledger, Woodland League with 4th class pupils planting the FOREST IN A BOX on St. Coman's Wood senior site (November 27th 2019)