

# The Girl Who Planted Trees

## Discussion Notes and Activity Ideas



£12.99 Hardback / £6.99 Paperback / Suitable for 3+ years

### About the book

In this empowering picture book by award-winning author Caryl Hart, one small girl inspires her whole village to plant a beautiful forest on the mountain.

In this lyrical and hopeful picture book, one girl's imagination, determination and positivity motivates a whole community to work together to create something amazing that will last forever. This story will inspire adults and children to take action for our environment, showing that, in the words of Greta Thunberg, "No one is too small to make a difference."

### About the author

CARYL HART is a full-time children's writer, who also runs creative workshops with schools, libraries and festivals. Caryl's books have been shortlisted for 19 regional and national awards and won 10 of these. Her *Princess* series, illustrated by Sarah Warburton, has sold over 220,000 copies worldwide.

### About the illustrator

ANASTASIA SUVOROVA is an illustrator from Russia, based in St Petersburg. Since early childhood, she has been drawing, dreaming and inventing stories. Now, after graduating from the Academy of Arts, she tries to learn about shape and colour, lightness and movement from nature. Anastasia creates illustrations for books, magazines and games.





# The Girl Who Planted Trees

## Discussion Notes

- The *Girl Who Planted Trees* gives us a lot to think about. Here are some ways you can talk about the story and its meaning.

### Guess the story from the cover

Take a look at the front cover and (without looking inside), see if you can guess what the story is about. Why do you think a girl might want to plant trees? Have you ever seen a tree like the one on the front cover? Why is it so small?

### Read the story together

Were your guesses correct? How was the story different to what you imagined?  
How did you feel at the end of the story? Write down some words to describe those feelings.

### Discussion questions:

- Why did the girl want to plant some trees? What gave her the idea?
- Where did the girl find the seeds she needed? Can you think of any fruits that have seeds, pips or stones? Can you describe them?
- What made the girl's plan to plant some trees more difficult? Did anything go wrong?  
How did the girl overcome these problems?
- Was the girl able to plant a whole forest on her own? Why did other people decide to help her?  
Have you ever worked with other people to get something done? How does it feel to work in a team? What are the advantages and challenges of working on your own compared to working with others?
- At the end of the story, many years have passed. The trees have grown really big and the little girl is now a grandma. Who do you think will look after the trees in the future? Why is it important for everyone to help care for our world?
- Can you think of three words to describe the girl in the story?
- The author, Caryl Hart, includes this quote at the beginning of the book: 'You are never too small to make a difference.' Do you think this was true in the story?
- Do you think people like you can make a difference in the world?



# The Girl Who Planted Trees

## Activity Ideas

### Science: Learn about how plants grow

In *The Girl Who Planted Trees*, a young child finds seeds to grow in the fruit she is eating. Choose a piece of fruit such as an apple, pear, peach, avocado or papaya. Cut the fruit in half so that you can see the seed or seeds. Can you draw the seed(s)?

Seeds also come from other kinds of plants. Let's see if we can find some! Have a look in your kitchen at home. Can you find any other kinds of seeds? You might have coriander, cumin or poppy seeds in your spice jars. Perhaps you can find the seeds inside a cucumber or tomato?

Try drawing or arrange your seeds from biggest to smallest. Can you find out what the fully grown plant looks like?

Below are some pictures from *The Girl Who Planted Trees*. They show how the girl looks after her young trees. What do you think a seed needs to be able to grow into a tree? How long do you think it takes a tree to grow?

*Water – the girl is watering the seeds so they can drink and grow*

*Sun – a plant needs warmth and light to survive*

*Soil – the seed needs a safe home underground*

*Time – seeds can take a long time to grow, especially a big tree*



# The Girl Who Planted Trees

## Activity Ideas

### Science: Learn about how plants grow

When seeds begin to grow, they make a stem and leaves that grow upwards towards the sun. They also develop roots, which grow downwards into the soil. Roots suck up water and nutrients from the soil, and leaves soak up energy from the sun.

Can you label the roots, stem and leaves on this drawing? What else can you label?

Leaves and roots can keep on growing for a long time. What could you do when your plant has grown too big for its pot?

Use the grid at the end of this pack to draw the story of a seed growing into a tree!





# The Girl Who Planted Trees

## Activity Ideas

### Science: Learn about how plants grow

#### Grow a bean

You will need:

A clear plastic cup or glass jar

Some newspaper

A dried broad bean, kidney bean, chickpea or other large dried bean.

- Cut a strip of newspaper and fold it lengthways so it's about as high as your jar.
- Roll up the newspaper to make a cylinder and place it inside your jar. Fill in the space inside the newspaper cylinder with some more scrunched up newspaper.
- Place your dried bean between the newspaper and the inside of the jar, so that it's about halfway down.
- Pour 1-2 cm of water into the bottom of your jar and place it in a sunny spot.
- Keep the newspaper damp by watering every few days.
- After a few days, your seed will sprout. Can you draw it once every week to show how it changes?
- Once your seedling is too big for the jar, you could plant it in a pot or outside.





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## Activity Ideas

### Science: Learn about how plants grow

#### Start a wild flower garden

Wild flowers are good for bees and butterflies and don't need much space to grow. You can buy mixed wild flower seeds from most supermarkets or garden centres in the springtime.

Fill a flowerpot with soil, or find a small, sunny corner of your garden or school grounds that you are allowed to use. You might need to dig the soil to remove weeds. Sprinkle your seeds over the soil and cover with a little more soil or compost. Remember to water them! You could compare seeds planted in a sunny spot to seeds planted in a shady spot. Which grow best? What happens to seeds that don't get enough water?

#### Leaf hunt

Take a walk in your garden, park, school grounds or countryside. How many different kinds of leaves can you find? Can you find out which trees they belong to? Why do you think leaves are different shapes?

Can you see a pattern of lines on your leaf? These are called veins. They carry nutrients around the leaves – just like the veins in your body carry nutrients around you!

Try making leaf rubbings – place your leaf face down on the table. Cover with a sheet of paper and rub all over using the side of a crayon. Can you make the pattern of the veins stand out? How about cutting up your rubbings to make a picture?



# The Girl Who Planted Trees

## Activity Ideas

### The environment: Why trees matter

In *The Girl Who Planted Trees*, the girl lives in a very dry, dusty place. One day she finds an old book with pictures showing that her home was once covered in a thick, green forest. Her grandpa tells her “Year after year, the trees have been cut down and all the animals have disappeared.”

Why do you think trees are important? What do they do for the environment? Here’s a great video about trees and how they help the planet: <https://youtu.be/5I7u5FMQxHA>

#### Trees for clean air

The air around us is made up of different gases. We breathe in oxygen and breathe out carbon dioxide. Cars and factories also produce carbon dioxide which (in high concentrations) is poisonous to people and animals. But trees do the opposite. They breathe in carbon dioxide and breathe out oxygen! What do you think would happen to our air if there were no trees?

#### Trees as homes

Can you think of any animals that live in or around trees?

Did you know that a single oak tree can provide a home and food for over 2,300 different kinds of plants and animals. All sorts of beetles, caterpillars, grubs, butterflies, moths, woodlice, spiders, birds, squirrels, mice, badgers and bats all rely on trees to survive. Plants like moss, lichen, fungi, ivy and honeysuckle also live in trees. You can find out more on the Woodland Trust website.

#### Trees for food

Can you think of any trees that provide food for humans? Have you ever picked an apple, plum, pear or cherry from a tree?

#### Trees for wellbeing

Have you ever walked in the woods or sat underneath a tree? Have you ever watched birds flitting around in the branches of a tree or seen a whole forest growing somewhere? How do you feel when you are near a tree or trees? Try sitting near or under a tree near your home. You might need to ask an adult to help you find a safe place and something dry to sit on. Close your eyes and take some deep breaths in and out. What can you hear? What can you smell? How do you feel?



# The Girl Who Planted Trees

## Activity Ideas

### The environment: Why trees matter

#### Meet a tree

Do you have a tree in your garden, school grounds or neighbourhood? Perhaps it's time to meet them properly! Try giving your tree a hug. Can you get your arms all the way around its trunk? If it's a very large tree, you might need some friends to help you! What does your tree's bark feel like on your cheek? Can you see any moss or other plants living in the bark? What does your tree sound like? Can you hear the wind in its leaves? Do its branches creak? Are there any birds or other animals in your tree? Try standing really close to your tree's trunk and looking up into its branches. How does that make you feel?

#### Draw a tree

Drawing or taking photographs are great ways to get to know a tree! What shape are the leaves? How do the branches come out of the trunk? How are the leaves attached? Are they in clumps or spread out along the branches? Does the tree have any seeds, such as acorns, conkers or "helicopters"?

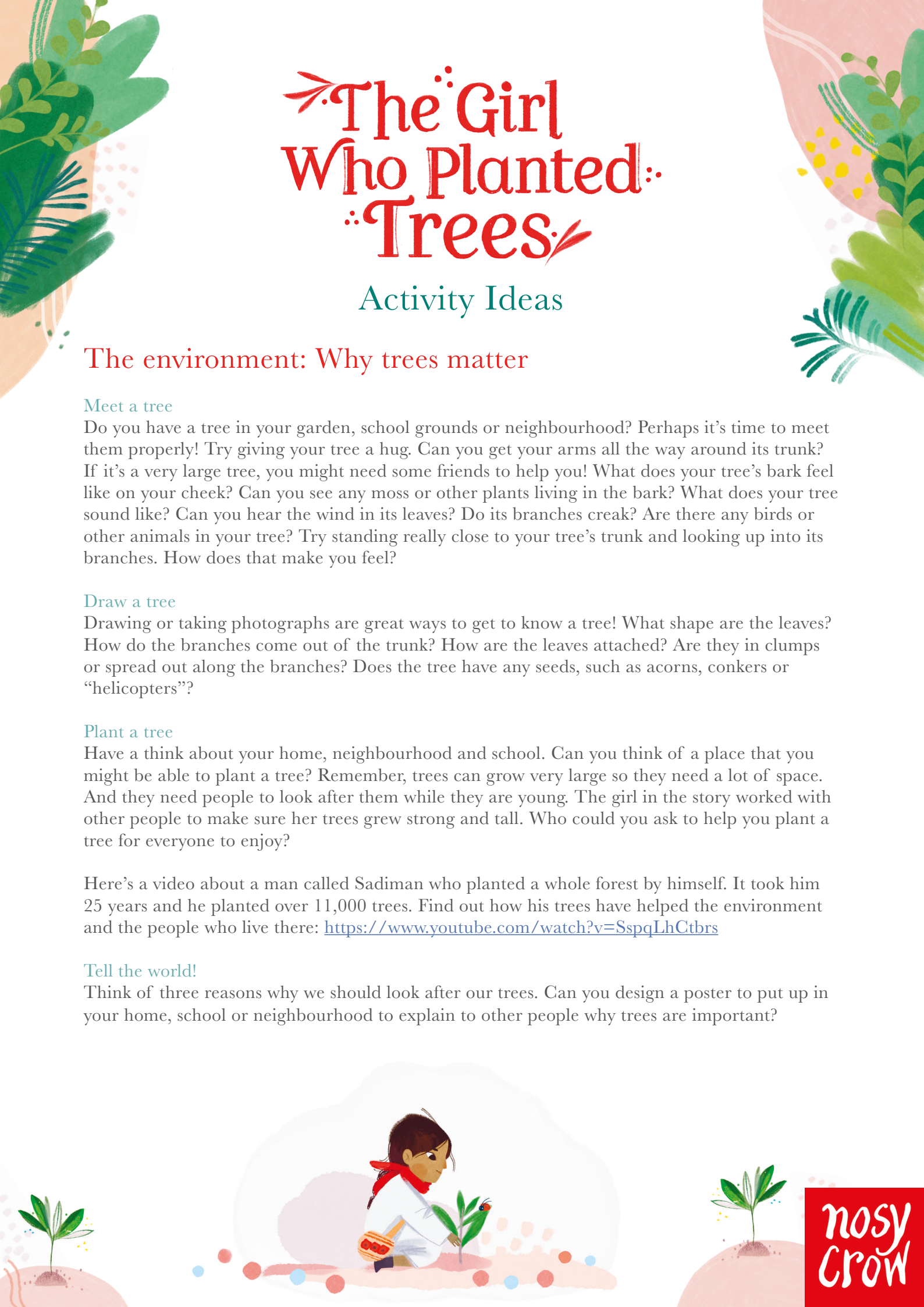
#### Plant a tree

Have a think about your home, neighbourhood and school. Can you think of a place that you might be able to plant a tree? Remember, trees can grow very large so they need a lot of space. And they need people to look after them while they are young. The girl in the story worked with other people to make sure her trees grew strong and tall. Who could you ask to help you plant a tree for everyone to enjoy?

Here's a video about a man called Sadiman who planted a whole forest by himself. It took him 25 years and he planted over 11,000 trees. Find out how his trees have helped the environment and the people who live there: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SspqLhCtbrs>

#### Tell the world!

Think of three reasons why we should look after our trees. Can you design a poster to put up in your home, school or neighbourhood to explain to other people why trees are important?



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## Activity Ideas

### Community Project: The Class Who . . .

In *The Girl Who Planted Trees*, the whole community comes together to help the girl plant lots of trees. Can you write a list of all the people who help and what they each do? For example, collecting seeds, carrying seedlings up the mountain, looking after the trees.

By the end of the book, we see how the girl's neighbours want to grow trees too and take care of them together.

Can you think of an idea that you can do with your community or classmates that will help make your local environment a better place? How might you work together? Do you need permission from anyone? How might you ask? How might you make sure they say yes?

Here are some ideas:

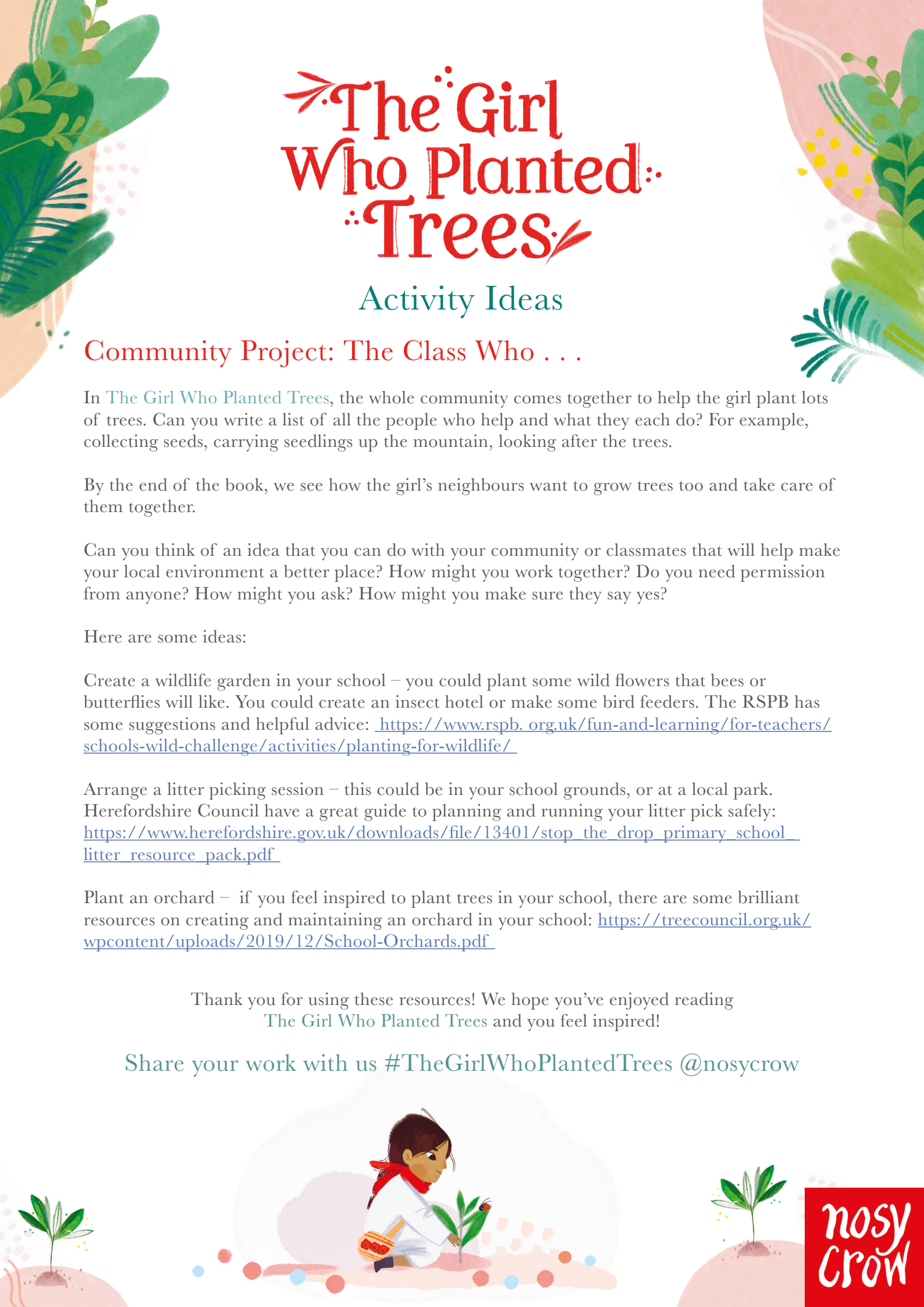
Create a wildlife garden in your school – you could plant some wild flowers that bees or butterflies will like. You could create an insect hotel or make some bird feeders. The RSPB has some suggestions and helpful advice: <https://www.rspb.org.uk/fun-and-learning/for-teachers/schools-wild-challenge/activities/planting-for-wildlife/>

Arrange a litter picking session – this could be in your school grounds, or at a local park. Herefordshire Council have a great guide to planning and running your litter pick safely: [https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/13401/stop\\_the\\_drop\\_primary\\_school\\_litter\\_resource\\_pack.pdf](https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/13401/stop_the_drop_primary_school_litter_resource_pack.pdf)

Plant an orchard – if you feel inspired to plant trees in your school, there are some brilliant resources on creating and maintaining an orchard in your school: <https://treecouncil.org.uk/wpcontent/uploads/2019/12/School-Orchards.pdf>

Thank you for using these resources! We hope you've enjoyed reading *The Girl Who Planted Trees* and you feel inspired!

Share your work with us #TheGirlWhoPlantedTrees @nosycrow



# The Girl Who Planted Trees

## Draw the story of a seed growing into a big tree!

The girl finds a fruit seed  
- can you draw it?

1

The girl plants the seed in soil  
- what does it look like now?

2

What does the seed need to grow?  
Can you help?

3

*Hint! Remember a plant needs sunshine and water*

Soon the seeds begin to sprout  
above the ground

4

Now the seed has grown into a young  
tree - it might be taller than you!

5

Years have passed and the tree is fully  
grown - what does it look like now?

6