

WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY 2011

Special edition

Summer 2011



MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT
GOVERNMENT OF GIBRALTAR

Forests: Nature at Your Service

Gibraltar once again participated in this year's World Environment Day celebrations, this year celebrating the International Year of Forests.

Forests cover one third of the planet and perform vital functions and services around the world which make life as we know it possible.

- They play a key role in our battle against climate change, releasing oxygen into the atmosphere while storing carbon dioxide.
- They feed rivers and are essential in supplying water to 50% of

the world's largest cities.

- They create and maintain soil fertility.
- They help to regulate the often devastating impact of storms and floods.
- They are home to over 50% of all the plants and animals that live on land.

Despite all the valuable ecological, economic, social and health benefits that they provide, we are destroying forests at an alarming rate: every hour, at least 4,500 acres of forest fall to chainsaws,

flames or bulldozers. Annually some 130 billion square metres of forest are cut down - that's an area equal to the size of Portugal. World Environment Day is an opportunity for us all to celebrate the importance of forests in our lives.



Tree Planting



In keeping with this year's theme, the Department of the Environment organised a tree planting event for participating schools. Students from St. Joseph's First School, Loreto Convent, St. Bernard's First School, St. Anne's Middle School, Notre Dame First School, St. Paul's First School, St. Mary's First School & Westside Comprehensive all helped to fill one of the planters in the newly re-opened park on Harbour Views Promenade. The afternoon was enjoyed by all the pupils who were quick to get their hands dirty!

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What is World Environment Day?

World Environment Day (WED) is an annual event which aims to be the biggest and most widely celebrated global day for positive environmental action. WED activities take place all year round but culminate on 5th June every year, involving people from all over the world.

WED celebrations began in 1972 and have grown to become the one of the main vehicles through which the UN stimulates worldwide awareness of the environment and encourages political attention and action. This is the 6th year that Gibraltar has participated.

Through WED, the UN Environment Programme is able to personalise environmental issues and enable everyone to realise not only their responsibility, but also their power to become agents for change in support of sustainable and equitable development.

WED is also a day for people from all walks of life to come together to ensure a cleaner, greener and brighter outlook for themselves and future generations.

WED is a call for action - organise a community clean-up, stop using plastic bags and get others to do the same, plant a tree or better yet organise a collective tree planting effort, walk to work, start a recycling drive . . . the possibilities are endless.





Sacred Heart Middle School



Sacred Heart Middle School began the morning's proceedings with a poem about rainforests written & recited by one of the pupils. This was followed by a dance piece which was choreographed by the girls themselves.





Loreto Convent First School



Loreto Convent First School performed “The Forest Song” which was written as a collaborative effort between all the first school teachers.





St. Bernard's First School



Year's 2 & 3 from St. Bernard's First School recited a poem about the rainforests whilst they acted out some of the different threats they face, such as logging.





The St. Joseph's First School choir performed a song entitled "It belongs to us" urging us all to take responsibility for the future of our planet.



St. Joseph's First School





St. Paul's First School



St. Paul's First School entertained the crowd with their rendition of the song "Chop! Chop!" by Ann Bryant.





St. Anne's Middle School



St. Anne's Middle School performed a special piece entitled "Forest lands". Written in three parts - "Mother's earth"; "Father's Business" and "Breath of Life", the piece was written and composed by Neville Guilliano with a dance piece choreographed by Zuleika Green.



Notre Dame First School



Notre Dame First School performed the song "Deforestation". The children wrote the lyrics themselves (with some help from their teachers) and put the words to the tune of Katy Perry's "California Girls"



Loreto Convent Middle School also used a Katy Perry song as the basis for their performance in which they urged us all to save the forests.



Loreto Convent Middle School



St. Mary's First School



St. Mary's First School performed two songs: "The Rainforest" and "Trees". Their performance was made even more entertaining by the children's bright & colourful costumes.





St. Joseph's Middle School

St. Joseph's Middle School once again wowed the crowd with their now traditional gym display. Their acrobatics demonstrated the kind of team work that is needed to successfully tackle the world's environmental problems.



2011 - The International Year of Forests

The United Nations declared 2011 as the International Year of Forests. It is an opportunity for us all to discover, celebrate, protect and use these ecosystems more sustainably.

- Forests are vitally important – they release incredible amounts of oxygen into the air we breathe; they play an essential role in the water and carbon cycles, they nourish and protect soil and have an impact on climate change. They are hugely important to human welfare and our continued existence on this planet depends on theirs.
- The forest environment is home to the largest number of life forms on earth. More than half of all the plant and animal species that live on land, live in forests. The Amazon rainforest is the greatest cradle of biodiversity on the planet and contains a tenth of the entire world's animals and over 40,000 different known plant species. A typical four square mile patch of rainforest contains as many as 1,500 flowering plants, 750 species of trees, 400 species of birds and 150 species of butterflies.
- Population growth, poverty, and increased cattle farming are among the major causes of deforestation. Half of the forests in the world have disappeared and been replaced by towns, villages, roads, crops and pastures.
- Forest destruction is not inevitable: throughout the world men, women and children are fighting to save them. Scientists, politicians and ordinary citizens warn us about the threats forests face and suggest alternatives to protect them. This year is an opportunity to celebrate their initiatives and their efforts.



Tree Planting

This year's World Environment Day Celebrations also incorporated a tree planting session at the newly re-opened Harbour Views Promenade. Representatives from 9 different schools attended and helped staff from GreenArc to plant Tamarisk Petandra, Hibiscus Rosa Sinensis, Strelitzia Reginae along with other assorted bedding plants.





