



NATURE INSPIRED GUITAR MUSIC
BY GEOFF ROBB

THE MUSIC OF TREES

EXTRAORDINARY FACTS AND
TALES ABOUT TREES

www.geoffrobb.com

WELCOME

At the end of my shows, I often get asked if there is a fact sheet with some of the information I shared so I decided to create one!

This guide contains information and extraordinary facts about some of the trees featured in the show.

Trees are the oldest living beings on Earth. They breathe, communicate, share food, raise their young and respond to the world around them with a sophistication that science is only beginning to understand.

Trees respond to sound, growing more quickly when surrounded by birdsong - and perhaps even music. Sitting quietly with a tree, listening to the breeze and birdsong, can open the mind to creativity in ways that a busy, distracted life cannot.

The album 'The Music of Trees' is available at the merchandise table and at geoffrobb.com — close your eyes and see if you can guess which tree you're listening to before reading the titles!





MAST YEARS

Generosity Underground

Every 3 to 5 years, trees have a 'mast year' - a bumper seed harvest that happens simultaneously across the whole country.

This strategy prevents squirrels, deer, mice, jays and wild boar from overpopulating, and ensures enough seeds survive to become trees.

People have also been eating acorns for thousands of years. The shells are removed, then the acorns are soaked and boiled to remove the bitter tannin, before being ground into flour and used for baking protein rich breads and cakes.

MYCELIUM

A Living Internet Beneath Your Feet

Beneath any ancient woodland, thousands of strands of mycelium connect the root tips of every tree in the forest.

This underground fungal network known as the 'Wood Wide Web' allows trees to share food, minerals and information across vast distances.

Through this fungal network, trees donate sugars produced by photosynthesis to the fungi, which in return share minerals extracted from the soil. Trees also send surplus food to sick, young or overshadowed trees that cannot produce enough of their own.

Mycelium





THE YEWE

Ancient Trees

A yew tree is not considered ancient until it is at least 900 years old. Every single part of the tree, apart from the flesh of the berry is highly poisonous.

Kingley Vale in West Sussex is one of the few remaining ancient yew forests in Europe with trees as old as 2,000 years old.

The yew was cut down across Europe as was the preferred wood for the longbow.

Often found in churchyards, some say they were planted to stop the peasants from grazing their animals there, but another theory is that the churches were built next to the sacred yew trees to bring the Pagans into Christianity.

The Yew

THE BANYAN

The One With Many Feet

The Banyan tree is the national tree of India and the largest tree in the world. Not because it grows as tall as the giant redwoods, but because it looks like a forest.

Known as 'the one with many feet' the banyan tree dangles strands that look like unkempt hair, that become thick and woody prop roots when they reach the ground, eventually resembling tree trunks. This process carries on until the original trunk is surrounded by pillars resembling a group of trees.

Communities often live next to banyan trees as they provide shelter and shade and in Andhra Pradesh, there is a tree that covers 4.7 acres and can shelter 20,000 people!

The Banyan





THE SILVER BIRCH

The Lady of the Wood

Easily recognised with silvery white peeling bark, the birch has a similar life span to a human.

To the Celts, it was known as the 'Lady of the Wood' and symbolised renewal and rebirth as it was often the first tree to show new leaves in spring.

You can make tea from the young leaves which are great for skin conditions, cystitis and rheumatism.

Birch has both male and female catkins on the same tree, and when the female catkins have been pollinated, they start to loosen and release their tiny seeds to be carried on the wind.

The Silver Birch

THE LINDEN

Heart Shaped Leaves

Linden (the old English name for Lime) has been on these islands since the end of the last Ice Age, 10,000 years ago.

Its heart-shaped leaves are easy to recognise, and its blossom makes a delicious tea that helps you sleep.

In ancient Germanic culture, it was said that you couldn't tell a lie under a Linden tree, which is why people got married beneath the tree and justice was often served there.

The Linden





FOREST BATHING

An Alternative to Antidepressants

'Shinrin Yoku' or 'Forest Bathing' was introduced in Japan as a government policy in the 1980s as an alternative to medication for people suffering from depression or who had suicidal tendencies.

They discovered that spending time in nature was more effective than antidepressants.

It isn't only the calming atmosphere and the quiet of the forest as trees are releasing chemicals into the air that calm us, lower our blood pressure and slow down our heart rate.

The Cherry

THE HAWTHORN

Home of the Fairies

Hawthorn leaves and flowers are said to open the heart to love and fertility, acting as an antioxidant that regulates blood pressure.

In Ireland, lone hawthorn trees are thought to be fairy homes - and in 1999, a campaign halted the M18 bypass in Co Clare to protect a single hawthorn tree. You can look up 'The Fairy Tree' on Google maps.

In an ancient collection of Welsh tales called the Mabinogion, Olwyn is the Goddess of Hawthorn and known as "she of the white track" because white blossom sprang up everywhere she walked, leaving trails of hawthorn hedgerows across the land.

The Hawthorn





THE WILLOW

The Tree That Gave Us Aspirin

Willow is often used for basketry as the thin strands of new growth are perfect for bending into shapes.

Cricket bats are traditionally made from willow but you might not know that the active ingredient in aspirin 'salicylic acid', also comes from the willow tree.

The ancient Chinese called the willow the 'Tree of Immortality' because of its ability to renew itself. Push a single twig into damp ground and it will grow into a new tree.

The Celts believed the willow helped release buried emotions and eased sadness grieving.

The Willow

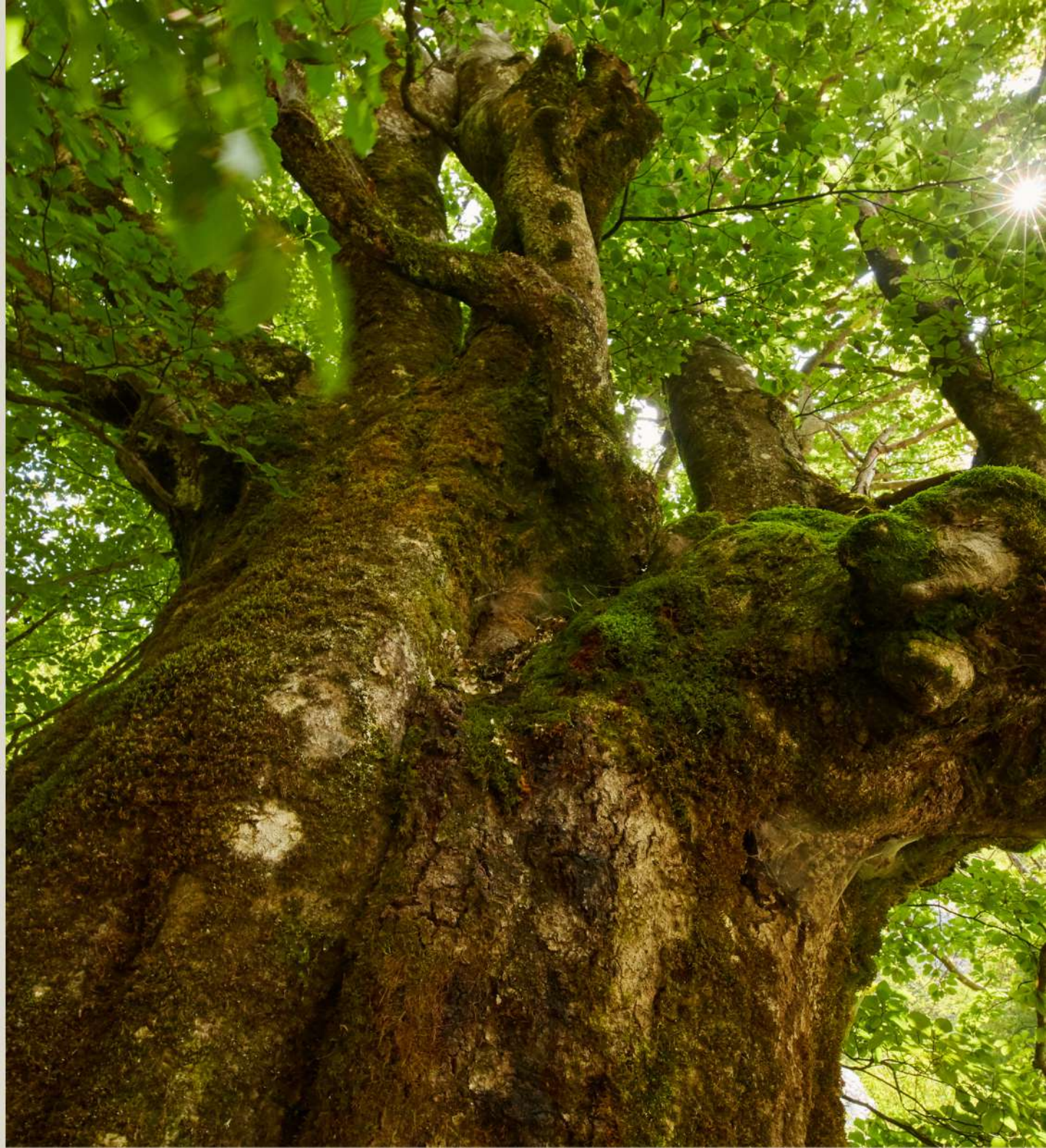
MOTHER TREES

The Guardians of the Forest

The oldest trees in any forest are the Mother Trees - their vast underground networks connect them to hundreds of younger trees, and their enormous canopies produce abundant food from sunlight.

Trees live longer and grow stronger together than they ever could alone.

The Beech





THE HORNBEAM

Our Strongest Native Tree

The hornbeam is the hardest and densest of all native British trees and was used for Roman chariot wheels and later on carriage wheels.

For centuries it was coppiced in Sussex woodlands for iron-making charcoal because as a dense, hard wood, it burns slowly and at very hot temperatures.

The iconic Steinway piano also uses hornbeam in its action parts.

The Hornbeam

THE ASH

The World Tree

In Norse mythology, the ash is 'Yggdrasill' - the World Tree, connecting earth and sky.

Newborn babies were once given ash sap to prevent disease and some traditions believed that carrying an ash leaf in your pocket would bring you good fortune - especially if it has an even number of leaflets on it.

Today, ash dieback threatens to destroy 95% of all ash trees in the UK - one of our most common and beloved native trees.

The Ash





The Elm

Europe's Oldest Elm Tree

Until 2019, Preston Park in Brighton was home to two ancient elm trees known as "The Preston Twins" until one had to be felled due to Dutch elm disease - leaving the surviving 400-year-old tree as a solitary witness to centuries of history.

It is thought to be the oldest elm tree in Europe and its interior is completely hollow - yet it still lives.

Dutch elm disease, spread by the elm bark beetle, has already destroyed over 25 million elm trees nationally since it arrived in the UK in the 1970s.

The Elm

JULIA BUTTERFLY HILL

738 Days in a Redwood

In 1997, in Humboldt County, Northern California, 23-year-old Julia Butterfly Hill climbed to the top of a 1,000-year-old California redwood she named 'Luna', and stayed there for 738 days on a 6ft by 8ft platform, to prevent it being felled.

She joined the Earth First campaign group, who supported her from the ground, and whose mission was to curb the destruction of the ancient redwood forests by The Pacific Lumber Company.

It's no surprise that her protest broke world records for tree sitting and drew media attention from all over the world, bringing awareness to the environmentally destructive logging practices.

Julia Butterfly Hill

