

I AM often introduced like this. "Here is Orla Farrell, she's planting a million trees with Ireland's million school children and their communities and she is just SOOOO passionate about Climate Change."

I'll tell you why that's not true.

In these dark mornings as I turn on the radio news and read the paper over my morning tea, I confess to you that the more I learn of new climate change-related floods, fires, and fleeing refugees the less I feel "Passionate about Climate Change". In fact, I might go so far as to say that I would think anyone completely sane would prefer to engage with anything *but* the subject of climate change. The bad and sad news all around is heavy going, especially if we are around young or vulnerable people and want to shield them from trauma.

Who actually relishes end-is-nigh stories? I admit to inordinately enjoying those alien or asteroid Hollywood films where the brave astronauts and scientists save the earth just in the nick of time and celebrate with tall coloured drinks, catchy rousing music, and a cigar. I love those films precisely because I am not actually expecting aliens to park in the clouds over our heads. Or for a burning asteroid to show up next to the moon in the winter sky any day soon. But in a week where I damaged the tree-mobile as I left a planting party on the Cooley peninsula due to my unexpected encounter with a pop-up-pond in the middle of the road I feel it doubly important to park the passion. Calm focus on what we can all do right here, right now to make things even a little better is a proven effective approach.

I confessed my unease at being introduced in the above fashion recently to Majella McAllister of the Museum of Childhood over a mug of tea and a thick slice of Hazelnut Coffee cake. I'd accepted her kind invitation to talk on a panel for Heritage Week in Tipperary Town Library, despite protesting that talking is not what we do (it's all in the motto; "Stop Talking, Start Planting"). An august assembly including the local heritage officer, a local councillor and an assembly of families had come on their Saturday afternoon with a promise of hearing of our passion project, of climate danger, of anger and protest.



Diarmuid McAree, Gerhardt Gallagher and Brendan Fizzsimons with Orla staffing the Tree Council of Ireland stand at the Bloom Festival

# No matter what the question - the answer is TREES

"I just feel somewhat lumped into the particular doom-mongering spiral when I am introduced as being passionate about climate", I said to Majella as we sat in the beautiful Excel Centre Café in the middle of town.

"I've been teaching since I first stood in as a 'sub' as a twenty-year-old UCD student. We teachers meet with great variety during our careers; a lot of us it's probably fair to say are cautious and perhaps rightly so around

the notion of extremism. I felt profound sadness, it's that grief you hear of now, when I watch David Attenborough's documentaries of species nearing extinction and hear of extraordinary efforts to breed endangered animals like the cheetah in game parks around the world. I wonder if my two new granddaughters, born this year, will ever see these animals. So, I recognise that Climate Change - in a time of so many challenges

- is the prime challenge of our generation. It's plain to see that this requires addressing and the sooner the better. What I have learned tells me that tree planting is the simplest way to cool the planet." I add that I had to use a petrol car to get to the Museum of Childhood Munster event because the Leaf, a 2014 Electric Vehicle would require hourly charging on such a journey. However, I'm pleased to report how my tree-deliveries are now mostly running on sunshine thanks to my 11 new P.V. panels on the roof of the house powering the Leaf Electric Tree Transporter. Decarbonising is of course vital too, to turn off the tap on global heating at the same time as planting trees, it's our other important message.

I feel about tree planting like I feel about housework. It is something very nice to have done. A bit like polishing, like dusting, like floor mopping. I do like, to take an example, when my house is vacuumed, I cannot say I am passionate, or even happy about Hoovering my stairs. If someone offered to do that I would be delighted. In fact, when I retired early from my teaching job one of the shower of surprise gifts I got from my colleagues - along with, at my special request a stout pair of work-boots, was of a robot



Left to right: Evelyn Murphy, Dr. Emma Corrigan and pupils of St. Mary's School with Grant Holden and Franke Van Der Laan (MeerBomenNu) at our National Tidy Towns multi-Award winning project, Baldoyle

## News from Ireland North

North West neuro-diverse volunteers lead the way

ALL THIS talk of extinctions brings me back to our great outing to "Wild Ireland" in Donegal - have you visited? It was such a pleasure to meet its owners and family, to hear their story of how they are restoring species that once roamed our countryside such as bears, beavers and their wolf pack and to join in their film-making about restoration. Their park is a world-class setup, located in a beautiful water and woodland setting. We are delighted to include them in our list of 2023-2024 restoration projects! This visit was the last stop on our celebration of projects with Cora Luttrell, Easy Treesie - Crann Ireland North co-ordinator and started with an invitation to the opening of the new Seán Dolans Gaelic Athletic Club in Creggan, Derry. Cora has been working on a variety of superb initiatives on our behalf, right through the Covid era and it was such a pleasure to take a trip up to see how some of our projects there are taking off. Thanks so much to all who



Mayor of Derry City and Strabane District Council, Patricia Logue at the opening of the Sean Dolans GAC facility with its 1301 Easy Treesie trees

have carried out so much re-greening with Cora. It is great to see such dramatic progress over a short 3 years. Tree cheers to all! We celebrated the official opening by First Minister Elect Michelle O'Neill and 1300 saplings planted by members of Seán Dolans GAC. Many thanks to all who worked on this project!

We'd the pleasure of meeting Mayor of Derry City and Strabane District Council Cllr Patricia Logue and Ulster GAA president Ciaran McLaughlin, who attended the grand opening along with Mark Durkan MLA and many local politicians, school and community representatives. Cora's report to us reads,

"Many thanks to Danny McDonagh, Head Gardener, Ballymagown Allotments, Derry, for facilitating and coordinating the planting of over 2,000 saplings at Ballymagown Allotments and Seán Dolans GAC. With Danny's enthusiasm, knowledge and care, along with his ability to always provide "the digging equipment", community groups and schools from the City of Derry planted native hedge rows, an apple orchard and pocket forests with saplings provided by the Easy Treesie - Crann, Trees for Ireland project. Danny has recently retired from his post as Head Gardener and "gone fishing" although he can still be found planting in his spare time.

A special thanks goes out to Claire Allison, owner of Añ Grianan Livery and Stud, Derry, for providing the space for many a planting party on her property. Louise Moorhead and her team from North West Spectrum have planted a variety of native saplings over the past two years, on lands at Añ Grianan Livery, in collaboration with Easy Treesie."



Danny McDonagh, Head Gardener, Ballymagown Allotments (left) with members of North West Spectrum, Louise Moorhead-Project Coordinator and Cora Luttrell, Easy Treesie - Crann





vacuum cleaner so that when I came home from tree planting the house would be done!

So the latest buzz; we don't need passionate communities. It's enough if you would quite simply like your place to look and feel a bit nicer by adopting some trees - and diligently - (that nice old-fashioned quality, beloved by teachers everywhere), and conscientiously - caring for them.

The magazine is always a great opportunity to give a big shout-out to the many planting communities, the children and community leaders who have been working so hard on greening their home places with new trees with us. Particular thanks again to Coillte, which continues its sterling sapling and logistical support for us again this year. A special high-five to the many businesses and government agencies who have supported us over the years - in recent weeks alone, the IEN, Patagonia and new donor Wells Fargo Bank for example who have sponsored two one-day-long children's workshops and whose volunteers will be joining us out planting in early 2024. Salesforce, The Loreto Order, Maxol-Greenprint and Kelsius have continued to provide donations to support our work. Goodera with Microsoft and others have not only organised tree maintenance parties but have gifted 120 most welcome Science and Wellness kits for our school Science Week programme. The complete list of our helpers and supporters will appear on an updated list of you all for our new [easytreesie.com](https://easytreesie.com) website ready to go any day now.

The Easy Treesie Story



The Easy Treesie Story - listen wherever you get your Podcasts.  
Logo by Ruza Leko

### Would you like to donate to our project please?

Please contact Orla or Marguerite at [orla@easytreesie.com](mailto:orla@easytreesie.com) and [info@crann.ie](mailto:info@crann.ie) if you

■ would like to come out planting with us

■ are a local authority/institution administrator with space for establishing small native woodland projects 1 hectare (2 GAA pitches or so) or smaller (Public Land Prioritised)

■ want to apply for trees to establish in your community

■ would like (please) to donate or to sponsor trees on our project (Certificates available, €10 per native tree), the new Stripe link for the Crann Easy Treesie project is below;

■ <https://buy.stripe.com/bIYal4cDMcPV7p6144>

The Microsoft Ireland team, with family and friends had a picnic at our Excel-lent Tree Maintenance event and sent thanks to the Santry Community Gardeners who showed us around their magnificent Fingal Co. heritage orchards afterwards



# Stop Talking Start Planting

## How to Plant an Elder Wand

**M**ANY of our dear readers of this magazine are committed to our Crann goals of "Re-Leafing" Ireland. Our Easy Treesie project aim is in support of this goal. Our growing list of planting communities is added to each season. We plan to pass the half-a-million-trees planted this coming season 2023 - 2024. By finding space for trees with the children in our families and local communities and planting first in our gardens and even patio pots, next in whatever public spaces we can organise, in our institutions and our workplaces, on farms and wherever we can wedge them in using the "Right Tree, Right Place" guidelines, we are being the change we want to see. Most of us may not be able to attend high-level meetings on global policy. We can, though, do our little bit in our own home places.

This winter we are issuing a simple challenge; can you do this Three Minute project and plant an Elder Wand?

Our native elder trees will capture carbon, soak up flooding, provide a haven for nature and you can make delicious recipes from the flowers and fruit! This project costs

nothing, it will provide useful shelter and can fill in gaps in hedgerows or borders. It doesn't grow very big so will suit most gardens, give it a haircut with a snips or little saw if it's getting too tall for you and give the cuttings to your friends so they can also grow their own trees! Check out our simple instructions. (We recommend planting three, in case some don't "take"). We



Felix Finkbeiner started the world Trillion Tree project by planting one apple tree at his Munich school at the age of nine, with a challenge for the children of the world to plant a million trees in their own countries.



Plant-for-the-Planet Global Youth Summit 2023  
Photo: Nicolas Det

are kicking off the project with our friends at MeerBomenNu at three Dublin workshops taking place with school children in Fingal, at Patagonia in Dublin City and at the Crann Nursery at Da Farm, Kiltarnan with local schoolchildren and their communities and interested tree growers. You can even start your project in a bottle if it is too rainy to go out and you can watch the formation of the elder roots over the weeks of winter until you get to plant it out when you have found a nice space for it. Do you know how to plant a native elder tree for free? Learn the technique of harvesting an elder cutting - or magic wand - and watch it grow from Franke van der Laan of the MEERGroen organisation in the Netherlands who paid a visit to Easy Treesie for National Tree Week 2023. Hear their inspiring story where "Nature is Our Nursery". Learn about how to identify an elder tree in your locality so that you can do some harvesting from it once

its leaves fall. You can learn more on our instructional film here on the Tree Council YouTube channel; - [https://youtu.be/D9\\_ZJs6L6kU?si=4AIhf0pL8tb8v7Is](https://youtu.be/D9_ZJs6L6kU?si=4AIhf0pL8tb8v7Is)

Another highlight of the year was the Plant-for-the-Planet Global Youth Summit held in Frankfurt in September, where Easy Treesie represented Ireland for the sixth year in a row. The highlights of the five days of workshops? Planting an apple tree, here in the heart of the Apple Wine district, that we donated to our hosts and meeting with country co-ordinators and young tree planters from all over the world. Participants included our hero Felix Finkbeiner, the young man who inspired our project and indeed the world Trillion Tree Project at the age of nine and is now working on the global restoration project. Their newest achievements? A million trees planted in the Yucatán this year and the launch of the new "Fire Mapper" app, free to all who want to monitor their woodlands.

# Does your corporate group want to volunteer with us?

**W**E LIKE nothing better than handing out spades to strapping youngsters, enthusiastic seniors and - well, all those who want to help in any capacity. Our volunteer communities themselves love nothing better than doing some very hard digging in the ground, or perhaps just encouraging their colleagues, getting out of their classrooms and offices. We admire them, praise them and we go around with our Blackwater Valley Maker oak bowls of chocolate tree-ts for them, talking trees as we go. Always followed by tea and chocolate cake (we actually *are* passionate about that element of our programme!)

What's it like to come out with us? Here are a few quotes sent to us by Milda of Microsoft Ireland from her Green Team volunteers who shared their feedback following their day out with with Fingal CoCo and us this summer.

"I had the privilege of volunteering in Northwood Park, Santry yesterday. With the guidance from Orla Farrell from Easy Treesie - Crann, Microsoft Ireland helped to carry out some tree maintenance and weeding around the young saplings planted a few seasons ago.

It was amazing to get involved in such an important initiative. I was inspired by the dedication and enthusiasm of everyone involved."

"Thank u very much for organizing such a great event. Awesome planning & execution We really enjoyed such a great day"

"Thanks for organizing, Its was great to meet ye all and have the chats"

"Thanks Milda and everyone for the great experience."

"Such an amazing day, thanks for organizing"

