

MEET A TREE

Introduction

During the Congress, this workshop involved some of the world's most renowned tree specialists and botanic garden educators meeting objects, around which their work is based, in a way they have never done before - by hugging them! "Meet a tree" is an excellent game to include in an education programme on trees or a walk through a garden.

How to play

The group is divided into pairs, **A** & **B**.

A wears a blindfold and **B** is the guide.

The object of the game is for **B** to lead **A** to a tree and invite **A** to meet his or her tree.



Later, when the blindfold is removed, **A** will be asked to recognise his or her tree.

When **B** leads **A** to the tree, he or she can help **A** remember by asking

questions such as -

- How big is this tree?
- Can you reach the branches?
- How does the bark feel? etc.

When **A** has recognised his or her tree, **A** & **B** swap positions, **B** now wears the blindfold and **A** becomes the guide.

A nice way to finish the game is to ask the children to make a drawing of their own tree.

Conclusions

By taking away the sense of sight, "meet a tree" helps encourage children and adults to become aware of their environment through the four senses - touch, smell, taste and hearing. Through being blindfolded and led, the game also encourages children and adults to develop trust in each other.

The participants at the workshop in May experienced that this game can be played at different levels. On meeting the tree blindfolded, not only did the participants feel, smell, listen and taste the tree, but most of them actually managed to identify it - to the subspecies! The workshop was a lot of fun and out of it came a great deal of appreciation for nature.

*Leiden University Botanic Garden, Nonnensteeg 3, 2311 VJ
Leiden, The Netherlands*