

VETree Basic level course – objectives and outlines

Objectives:

When you have completed this course you should be able to do the following:

1. Give a definition of a veteran tree that is of importance for biological or heritage value.
2. Explain why trees can live so long
3. Describe how and where roots grow and why they are important
4. Undertake a simple survey of a veteran tree in the field
5. Assess where management is likely to be appropriate for old trees or their surroundings

Course duration:

9.30-4.30 with two refreshment breaks of 20-30 mins and 1 hour for lunch (can be amended to suit course leader and delegates, but 7 hours are the minimum number required).

Session 1: Introductions

Objectives:

1. To Introduce the course
2. To break the ice, to relax participants and course leader and get them into a learning frame of mind; to allow participants to find out a little about each other.

(Note that we anticipate that course leaders will already know a bit about participants from course enrolment process).

Methods:

Pair working

Timing	Content	Who
9.30	Course starts, course leaders introduce themselves and how the course will work (translators etc.), plan for the day.	Course leader
9.40	Essential bits of H&S, fire exits, toilets etc.	Course leader
9.45	Introduce icebreaker. Ask participants to work in pairs (or a three if odd number) and to find out from each other: what their name is, where they work and what they do, what their expectations are of the course. Each participant should introduce their partner and vice versa.	Participants in pairs
9.55 – 10.15	Go round the room and ask each participant to introduce the other person in their pair briefly. Make some notes of the key expectations on a white board/flip chart. Keep this to refer to at the end of the course.	Whole group/course leader

Session 2: Defining an ancient tree

Objectives:

By the end of this session participants will be able to:

1. List the characteristics of an ancient tree
2. To give a definition of an ancient tree
3. Explain why age and size are not reliable methods of characterising an ancient tree

Methods:

Whole group discussion

Buzz group working

Timing	Content	Who?
10.15 2 mins	Introduction to the session which will include: What are veteran trees? How to recognise them? Exploring the relationships between age, size and condition	Course leader
10.17 5 mins	Exercise 1: Course leader shows some pictures of old trees, on screen and as handout. No doubt that these trees are old, ask participants what characteristics of them tell you this? Short feedback session: any issues/problems?	Participants to call out and leader writes on flip chart. Course leader
10.22 8 mins	Show illustration of the aging process on screen. Describe how trees age, canopy, trunk & roots. Do tree yoga exercise	Course leader
10.30 10 mins	Slide show introduction about biodiversity and old trees. Include a little about fungi and decay.	Course leader
10.40 15 mins max	Exercise 2: Trees on sheet – label up all the habitats - split into groups of 3. Get groups to add up numbers of different habitats. Give a bar of chocolate to the group with the most! Get groups to feedback examples of the different habitats.	Buzz groups
10.55 5 mins	Give examples of saproxylic invertebrates, life cycle stages and very specific niches. Highlight same habitat in different conditions i.e. shade/sunny. If you have time or a group with more experience, you could get the groups to add species examples to their habitats on the trees in exercise 2.	
11.00 10 mins	Cultural and aesthetic values of veteran trees.	
11.10 - 11.15	Tie together all the values into a definition and illustrate the difficulty of this – examples. Then do a quick review of what done so far	Course leader

11.15 -11.40 Coffee break (Get everyone to be ready to go out on site by the end of the coffee break).

Session 3. Field visit – ancient tree features

Objectives:

By the end of this section participants will be able to

1. Identify at least 5 features of ancient trees in the field and be able to explain why they are important for wildlife
2. To carry out a simple survey of an ancient tree

Methods:

1. Field visit to look at ancient trees with a structured discussion about the ancient tree features that can be seen.
2. Fill in a simple survey card

Timing	Content	Who?
	Introduction to the session Identifying ancient tree features and looking critically at old trees	Course leader
11.45-12.15	The group visits specific trees which have been identified prior to the course and that illustrate specific features.	Course leader taking whole group together. Walk to one or two trees and highlight the potential biodiversity values on the trees and why the habitats are important for biodiversity. Mention dead wood management.
12.15-13.00	Exercise 3: Group activity. Each group takes a recording card and completes it for a single tree (chosen in advance by the course leader and not more than 5 trees). Then the whole group goes round to each of the trees and they describe what they have found and the biodiversity values of their tree. Discuss management of dead wood and provide handout.	Small group activity with course leader helping where needed.

13.00-14.00 Lunch

Session 4. Tree management

Objectives:

1. To assess when management is likely to be appropriate for specific old trees or their surroundings
2. To be able to give simple guidelines for the appropriate management of old trees

Methods:

Video

Discussion

Group working

Timing	Content	Who?
14.00	Introduction to the session Managing old trees	Course leader
14.00-14.15	Exercise 4: Root facts 'true or false' List of root facts and figures. Statements scattered around the room on flip chart paper for participants to hunt for the correct answers. Can be done in pairs.	Participants
14.15-14.25	Results and feedback session	Course leader
14.25 2 mins	Where have ancient trees come from? Short introduction	Course leader
14.30-14.45	Exercise 5: Browsers or natural disasters? Split group into 3 groups with one question each, give them 5-7 minutes to discuss, then get feedback on the flip chart.	Participants
14.45-15.10	Problems & issues related to management Video/presentation of options/ideas for managing the land around the tree/haloing.	Course leader presentation with video clips
15.10-15.50	Exercise 6: In small groups discuss the management options for a tree (illustrated by photographs) and report back to the rest of the group. Include tea break in the time for discussion.	Small groups of 3 or 4 – ideally mix them up. Each tree to illustrate a different issue/solution. E.g. a dead tree, one needing halo clearance, one with bad root damage issues, one overhanging a picnic area/car park/path, one very top heavy/unbalanced etc.
15.50 – 16.10	Video of cutting trees, followed by summing up of management section	Video and course leader

Session 5. Conclusions and closure

Objectives:

1. To give the participants final opportunities for questions & comments
2. To give the participants information on where to go for further information and help
3. To obtain feedback from participants

Methods:

Open Q&A session
Hand out fact sheets/memory sticks
Feedback forms

Timing	Content	Who
16.10-16.20	Question & answer session, summary. Return to the expectations list and go through with the group	Course leader & participants
16.20-16.25	Protection and legislation Common sense guide to risk video if you finish ahead of time	Course leader
16.25-16.30	Where to go for more information, hand out attendance certificates while participants complete feedback forms	Course leader & participants
16.30	Course finishes	