



Denmead Junior School

Building success, inspiring curiosity

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Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope this letter finds you and your family safe and well. For those families self-isolating or whose children are having to self-isolate, we miss you and are thinking of you.

Although we are doing our best to reach out to you, please remember to reach back – we always want to hear from you.

In my last school, before I left, a child presented me with a small oak tree sapling that he had grown from an acorn that he had collected from the school site. He said he'd been inspired by one of my assemblies which focussed around the idea of, "From tiny acorns do mighty trees grow". It was a lovely gesture and made me think about more recently about where we are as a school.

Some of you, like me, (there is a comma in there – I don't mean 'some of you like me'!) are excited about some of the recent developments in school, especially the new outdoor classroom. But just like the tiny oak tree, the seeds for this were planted long before my arrival. We met as a governing body yesterday to undertake online governing training around 'Setting the strategic direction of the school' and we were reflecting on our current vision and plans for the future.

If you look on our website (as we did yesterday), one of the key objectives from last year was this:
"Continue to develop our extensive grounds to promote outdoor learning."

Miss Halford, with the support of the school, introduced Forest School more than 18 months ago, and under her stewardship, it has gone from strength to strength: Again, this seed had already been planted and this resource has amazing potential. It will benefit all those who engage in it in so many deep and exciting ways.

High-quality outdoor learning experiences are proven to:

- develop reflective and inquisitive thinking along with problem-solving approaches in 'real' situations
- encourage holistic development of children
- develop resilience and adaptability in occasionally adverse circumstances
- allow children to become more able to identify hazards and risks
- develop a love, appreciation and respect for nature and all that is living
- develop an understanding of how we can look after our environment
- develop self-awareness, confidence and self-esteem
- develop collaborative-working and communication skills
- provide positive health benefits – both physically and mentally – and assist gross and fine-motor development
- develop a lifelong love of the outdoors

to name but a few!

We are busy developing and extending the infrastructure to enable us to provide a high quality, outdoor learning offer for ALL children. I am very excited for your children, with what we may be able to offer in the very near future, but again, the seed had already been firmly planted before my arrival.



In my newsletter last week, I spoke about the 'Orchard' we would like to plant, and to that end, we have been in touch with a local fruit tree nursery who have recommended a number of late harvesting apple and pear trees. We are hoping to buy in 16 trees, more than enough for us to call it an 'orchard' (Mrs Painting has reliably informed me that you only need 7+ trees for it to be classified as an orchard).

The planting of the orchard would help us with our future plans for an outdoor learning programme.

Now, I know I'm being cheeky here, but I was always told, if you don't ask you don't get, so here goes...

Would any of you parents/families like to adopt one of the 16 fruit trees? You would get your own plaque and we could even try and find a way where you could help us plant it – in a Covid safe way.

The cost for each tree is £40.

If you would like to 'adopt' a tree, please email the school office, where they will be able to set up and take your donation through Scopay. Please don't feel obliged, it's just that we thought some of you may want to and be in a position to, although I do recognise, this is not the time to be asking for donations.

Attached to this newsletter is a run-down of the trees we would like to purchase, along with a brief description.

In the meantime, thank you as ever for your continued support. Your feedback is always appreciated, so please let us know how we're doing and whether we could be doing better – I am always pleased to receive constructive criticism, which I receive from home and the ladies in the office on a regular basis!

And finally, this weekend marks the start of the Big Garden Birdwatch, run by the RSPB (see website links below).

<https://www.rspb.org.uk/get-involved/activities/birdwatch/>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/live-lessons/common-birds-in-garden-playground-park/zypmjsjg>

Please get involved if you can. We are blessed that our school grounds provide the natural habitat for many species of birds. Wouldn't it be good if our children had the facility to observe these birds in their natural environment to learn more about them? I think I have another idea... Miss Halford!?!

Kind regards,

A. Clarke

Mr Andy Clarke

Head Teacher



Apples

Fiesta



The *Malus domestica* 'Fiesta' is a late-season dessert apple, it is the most commonly used and one of the best for juicing. The Fiesta produces a bountiful amount of juice, that is particularly sweet, rich and sharp in flavour. The Fiesta often replaces the Cox's Orange Pippin in apple cookery as its slices much like Cox's Orange Pippin keep their shape even after baking. Apples are one of the easier fruit trees to grow and are increasingly becoming more popular with gardeners.

Braeburn



The Braeburn is a cultivar of apple that is firm to the touch with a red/orange vertical streaky appearance on a yellow/green background. Its colour intensity varies with different growing conditions.

Greensleeves



One of the best and most popular garden **apple trees**; **Greensleeves** was introduced in 1977 from EMRS in Kent, and is a cross between James Grieve x Golden Delicious. In character it resembles a better version of the latter. **Greensleeves Apple tree** – Season: Harvest late September, can be used through to late November.

Bramley



Bramley is a heavy cropper once established, with high-quality fruits that can be stored. Grow **Bramley** alongside another **apple** variety such as Braeburn for best fruit set, as it is not self-fertile.

Reverend Wilks



Reverend **Wilks** was the Secretary of the RHS from 1888 - 1919, and this superb mid-season cooking **apple** was named in his honour. The very large fruit are a pale primrose yellow, flushed with a delicate pinky-red and cook to a pale yellow froth with a delicate aromatic flavour.

Sunset



Genus *Malus* are small to medium-sized deciduous **trees** with showy flowers in spring and ornamental or edible fruit in autumn; some have good autumn foliage colour.

Idared



Idared is a type of apple cultivar from Moscow, Idaho, United States. Variety is characterized by a non-uniform skin color. First developed at the University of Idaho Agricultural Experiment Station in 1942; it is a cross between two apple varieties.

Crispin



The Mutsu apple was introduced in 1949 and is a cross between the 'Golden Delicious' and the 'Indo' apple cultivars first grown in Aomori Prefecture, Japan. The apple's name is the former name of a large section of the Tōhoku region, Mutsu Province, which Aomori was created from during the Meiji Restoration.

James Grieve



James Grieve is an old variety of apple. It gets its name from its breeder, James Grieve, who raised the apple from pollination of a Pott's Seedling or a Cox's Orange Pippin apple in Edinburgh, Scotland some time before 1893.

Laxton Superb



The 'Laxton's Superb' is an apple cultivar that was developed in England in 1897. It is a cross breed between 'Wyken Pippin' and 'Cox's Orange Pippin'. It is a British apple with a green color and a dull red flush. It is a firm-textured dessert apple.

Saturn



Saturn is a good new English **apple**, developed by the famous East Malling Research Station and released 1997. It has all the best qualities of a modern **apple** - an attractive sweet/ flavour with a tangy edge to it, clean appearance, and crisp flesh.

Lord Lambourne



Once assessed by 'Gardening from Which?' as the best all-round British garden apple, this is indeed a superb mid-season variety. The crisp, firm fruits are bursting with sweet juice! Ready to pick from September, they will keep well until Christmas!

Pears

Conference



Conference (pollination group 3) is one of the most self-fertile all **pear trees** and will produce a good crop when grown on its own.

Doyenne du Comice



Pyrus communis '**Doyenne du Comice**' is a popular variety of dessert **pear**, bearing delicious **pears** in mid-to late autumn.

Williams bon Chretien



Usually just called **William's**, this is a beautiful old **pear** variety - large, sweet, smooth and very juicy with the fruit turning from green to yellow when ripe. While it is a standalone, superb eating **pear**, **Williams bon Chretien**, which is partially self fertile, is also great for stewing or poaching.

Onward



Onward is an attractive yellow **pear**, often with an orange flush, and occasionally some russet. The flavour is of high quality and it is a reliable cropper - all in all, an excellent garden **pear** variety.