

Teaching Resources

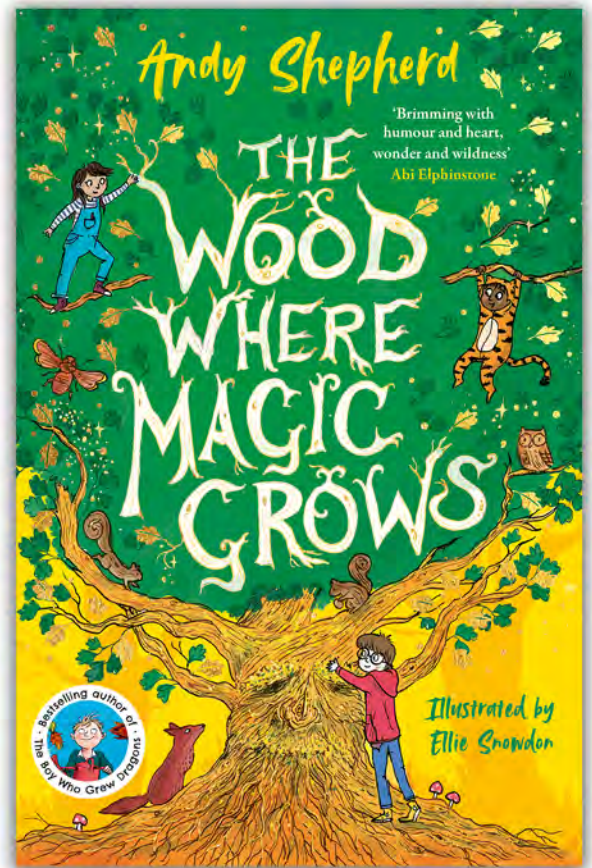
Written by Andy Shepherd



Exploring the cover

I love the wonderful artwork for the cover and interior illustrations which have been created by illustrator Ellie Snowdon with book cover design by Nick Stearn.

- 🍃 What are your first thoughts on looking at the cover?
- 🍃 What do you notice about the tree?
- 🍃 Is there anything unusual about the animals in the picture?
- 🍃 Have you ever climbed a tree? How did it feel?
- 🍃 What kind of magic do you think grows in the wood?



Getting to know the characters

Write down three things you learn about Iggy and Cal in the first two chapters.

Use examples to illustrate this. Start to build a character profile for the characters and add to it as you read the story. At the beginning, Iggy is new to being a big brother. What does he learn by the end of the story?



Be a Detective

There is a mystery going on at Greenacre. What clues can you spot in the first three chapters that suggest that adventure is just around the corner for Iggy and Cal?



Getting to know Trees

In the story, the Treetoppers name the trees they meet. There's Groak, Turrety, Occy, Silver and even Crabby. Why do they decide on these names?

Can you find out what kind of trees Occy, Turrety and Groak are?

Check the text to find descriptions of them and what type of tree they are. (Hint: look at the following pages p.44, p.161, p.162)

Learn five types of trees and then see if you can identify them when you are outside. Look at leaf shape, the colour of their bark, if they have seeds or flowers or any other distinguishing characteristics.

Maybe you could draw and label a picture like Mae does for Groak? See p.161.

Can you find a tree like Groak, Occy and Turrety near you?

Look at the pictures of trees below. Can you see the faces?

Imagine if they could talk, what sort of character might they be?

Are they friendly and excitable like Occy or a bit grumpy like Crabby?

What do you think their name might be?

Write a description of one of these trees or a piece of dialogue where you get to know them.



Treasure

Iggy, Mae and Cal leave little gifts for the trees and Wildtop Wood opens to let them explore. It might be a shiny acorn, a beautiful feather, a smooth stone or a leaf. Some small treasure from nature that the children have found and paid attention to.

This shows the trees they care enough to really notice the little everyday magic that nature provides.

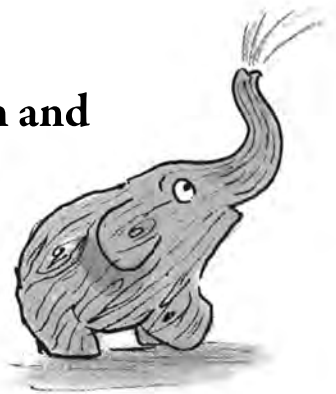
What gift would you leave?



Drama

Play out the scene where Iggy and Cal are in the kitchen and the wooden animals are coming to life.

Freeze frame and create speech bubbles for what the characters might say.



Growing Magic Through Imagination

In the story, the green magic is fuelled by the imagination of the children. The trees form walkways and tree forts and play games alongside them.

If you wandered into a wood where magic grew, what things can you imagine? What would you most like to see happen?



Creative Writing

Point of View



- ✦ Iggy misses his best friend Rafi when he moves house. Imagine you are Iggy and write a letter to Rafi describing what it's like to live next to a wood where magic grows.
- ✦ Write from the point of view of Iggy's mum talking about the strange things happening around Greenacre. How might you explain all the wildly growing greenery, all the piles of acorns and the wooden animals turning up in unexpected places?
- ✦ Write a scene from the point of view of Occy – the tree outside Iggy's window. What does Occy see? How does Occy feel? Is there anything Occy wants to tell Iggy?

Write a Poem

I love gardens, especially secret or overgrown gardens.
You never know what you might find!

Do one of the following:

- ✦ Find a picture of an overgrown garden. Write a poem or descriptive paragraph about the garden and see if you can use personification, metaphors and similes.
- ✦ Write a poem about trees in the shape of a tree!
- ✦ Can you write a sound poem for a wood?



Persuasive Writing

Iggy and Cal hear about the meeting that Councillor Thornwood has set up to discuss the future of Wildtop Wood. Imagine you are there, listening to Councillor Thornwood. Write a letter speaking up for the wood and encouraging other people to help save the trees.

Instructions

Write clear step-by-step instructions on how to plant a tree and care for it.

Writing Dialogue

Imagine a conversation between Iggy and Mae when they first meet. Write it down and see below for tips on how to punctuate your speech.

1) New speaker, new line.

‘Why have you got sticks on your head?’ asked Iggy.

‘I’m in disguise,’ replied Mae.

2) Use a small letter after the speech closes.

‘That squirrel just threw an acorn at me!’ exclaimed Cal.

3) Keep all the punctuation inside speech marks.

‘Trees don’t talk!’ she huffed.

4) Use action to create atmosphere.

‘That tree just poked me,’ Cal said, rubbing his arm and backing away from the outstretched branch. ‘I don’t think it likes me very much.’



Descriptive Writing

Imagine being up in the treetops with the Treetoppers, describe what you can see from your vantage point. What can you hear? Think about all your senses, sight, sound, smell and touch.



Trees



Do you think trees have different characters?
What three words might describe the first three trees Iggy and Cal meet?

P.9 ‘the tree sprang in through the opening, leafy limbs tumbling past me. . . It was like wrestling a friendly green octopus.’

P.19 ‘There were fruit trees here too, standing in huddles, their pink blossomy branches almost touching and their leaves whispering around us.’

P.23-24 ‘the tree murmured and creaked around us. Every time we took a step, our feet caught on trailing ivy or stumbled over crisscrossing roots bursting through the ground. I felt my arm snag on a branch and was yanked back... I felt a branch jabbing into my side, pushing me, making me lurch the other way.’

Spot a Rowan



In Chapter 6, Iggy discovers the octopus tree is a rowan by looking at a picture of the leaves.

P. 44 ‘This tree had leaves – the book called them ‘leaflets’ – arranged in pairs along a stem, with another leaflet at the end. They were long and oval and had wiggly edges, which it called ‘serrated’.

P. 44-45 ‘The rowan tree is well known for being magical and is often planted close to houses for protection. It is said that rowans prevent travellers from getting lost, and there are those who believe the rowan tree may act as a portal.’

Can you identify the trees near you?

Have you got any rowan trees near you? Draw the leaf shape and go and see if you can find one next time you are exploring.



Art and DT

Drawing Challenge

Draw a picture of Greenacre – the cottage Iggy and Cal have come to live in.

P. 18-19 'I glanced up at the cottage, the place we'd left our cosy flat to come and live. The houses on either side of it were much bigger. With its thatched roof, this one sat between them like a little mouse wearing a straw hat, and the octopus tree stuck up proudly like a feather protruding from it.'

P. 54 'You could hardly see the bricks as the whole cottage looked green. It was definitely living up to its name of Greenacre!'



Create Your Own Woodland Warrior

In my story, the children create their own woodland warriors to help protect Wildtop Wood. There's Pintle Pine (a happy flappy pine cone), Mossie (a catapult-wielding moss creature) and Twigly (a knobbly, slightly wobbly, but ever so determined stick). Why not make your own woodland warrior!



Design, Draw or Make a Junk Model of Your Perfect Treehouse

Iggy, Cal and Mae find a secret way into the wood thanks to the trees. And Turrety grows them the perfect base for their adventures. Imagine the trees were listening to your every wish. Design, draw or make your own treehouse. What would it look like? Would it have any special features?



Petal Art Animals

I was very inspired by the work of Hannah Bullen Ryner (hannahbullenphotogra.wixsite.com/hannahbullen-ryner-1) who makes beautiful creations from petals and leaves.

They are temporary and fleeting, created in the woodland and then photographed before they disappear. Iggy, Mae and Cal create their own birds and butterflies and even a miniature wolf.

See what animals you can make from fallen leaves, twigs, petals, seeds, feathers – whatever you can find that has fallen to the ground. (Remember, Nature leaves us lots of gifts to play with without us needing to take things from plants that are still growing and in need of them!)



Photographs © Hannah Bullen Ryner

Map Making

Explore (or imagine and make up!) a wood like Wildtop Wood and draw your own map like the Treetoppers do – for example they spot a tree which ‘had dark red leaves and was bent and crooked and held a staff of a branch in front of it’ and they call it ‘the wizard tree’. Find and include landmarks like this on your map.

Illustration

Look at the amazing illustrations inside the book by Ellie Snowdon. Illustrate a page from the book that has no pictures in your own style, either in black and white or in colour.



Poster

Design a poster to save Wildtop Wood!



Collage

Build a collage tree using old magazines or coloured paper. Maybe you could include descriptive words on the leaves.



Board Game

Create your own board game based on the wood leading you to the grandmother tree, Ealdemodor. What might you meet that would help or hinder you?

Music

Create sound effects or music for a wood. What about a wood at night or in daylight – how might it sound different?

Sign Language

Mae has moderate hearing loss and as well as wearing hearing aids she also lip reads and uses sign language. There are hundreds of different sign languages all over the world. Mae knows American Sign Language but is also learning British Sign Language (BSL). Can you learn the alphabet in BSL? Try finger spelling your name and the name of the characters from the book.

Can you learn the signs for:

- 👉 Squirrel
- 👉 Mouse
- 👉 Fox
- 👉 Elephant
- 👉 Tree

And how to sign these phrases:

- 👉 Hello. What is your name?
- 👉 My name is . . .
- 👉 How are you? I'm good thanks.



Once You've Read The Story:

Ancient Trees and How We Can All Help Them!



In the story, the children meet and help Ealdemodor who is an ancient oak tree at the heart of Wildtop Wood. Ancient trees are vitally important. In the UK we have a huge number of ancient and veteran trees and they have been a part of our landscape, history and culture for hundreds of years. See if you can find any ancient trees near you. They usually have a small canopy, a wide trunk and are often hollow.

Find out as much as you can about the tree. What kind of tree is it? Does anyone know how old it is? Can you name three things in history that this tree would have seen? If this tree could talk, what do you think it would tell you?

Ancient and veteran trees need and deserve our help and protection just as they themselves help and protect thousands of species.

We can help first by locating them. Go to the Woodland Trust guide (ati.woodlandtrust.org.uk/what-we-record-and-why/what-we-record/) and learn how to spot ancient, veteran and notable trees. If you find one near you, check if it is on the Woodland Trust's ancient tree inventory and if it's not help them put it on the map.

'Ancient trees are defined by their age, particularly when compared to other trees of the same species. There is no set age for a tree to be considered ancient, as different species age at different rates. Birch trees, for example, are fast-growing, and could be classed as ancient at 150 years old, while a yew tree might receive the same accolade at 800 years of age. The Fortingall Yew in Perthshire, Scotland, could be considered the oldest tree in the UK. Modern experts estimate it to be between 2,000 and 3,000 years old, although some think it could be far older – maybe even 5,000 years old.'

Excerpt from: woodlandtrust.org.uk/trees-woods-and-wildlife/british-trees/ancient-trees/



Research



Find out more about how trees communicate with each other. Make a list of reasons why trees are so important. Learn about the life cycle of trees and also how they give us oxygen. Research some amazing trees around the world. Hint: you could start by looking at the bristlecone pine and giant redwoods. Find out more about the living bridges crafted by the Khasi people.

Letters



Family and friendship are very important in *The Wood Where Magic Grows*. Iggy really wants to be a good big brother to Cal. What does family mean to you? Write a card to someone in your family telling them why they are important to you. Write a poem or descriptive paragraph describing a member of your family.

A Wonder Wander



I love to go on what I call a 'wonder wander'. I go outside and just wander. And while I wander I say to myself 'I wonder, what if...?' Even if I'm in the most seemingly boring place this little question can turn the ordinary into something extraordinary. Have a go yourself. Go outside and take a little wander around. What can you hear? Smell? See? Notice as much as you can. Then choose one thing: a leaf, a stone, a bug. Describe it to someone in as much detail as you can. What does it look like? What does it feel like? Does it remind you of anything else? Stories often start with questions. For *The Boy Who Grew Dragons* it was: 'What if dragons really did grow inside dragon fruit?' For *The Wood Where Magic Grows* it was: 'What if trees could talk?' Can you think of a 'What if' question for the object you've been studying?

