



Nature Deficit Disorder: Kids, Adults, A Whole Generation

There has been a buzz in the news today about the loss of contact with nature among children today; something that has been termed 'nature deficit disorder.' The National Trust has announced it will be launching a strategy for tackling the problem.

Nature – Deficit - Disorder. Or put another way: We are – Lacking - and in Disarray.

Where is the sense in losing touch with the natural world around us? There lie our resources, our space and sustenance. How has it come to this? How have consumerism and the glare of screen and tablet become more alluring than the incredible gifts that the outdoors offers us?

A single tree, persevering despite difficult conditions, framed against a background swoop of hillside; an endless expanse of ocean that licks your feet to a rhythm that, strangely, is in tune with your breathing; moist woodland chill of morning beneath the treetop chatter of birds; raging wind in your hair bringing a storm in from a distant black sky.

Where something is missing, the entire system has to compromise, and strains, stresses, even breakages appear. Where meaningful contact with nature, of which we are a part, is stifled, the deficit plays a role in mental stress, physical pain and illness, relationship conflicts.

The UK has a huge amount of green space. It has over 11 thousand miles of coastline and many thousands of miles of rivers and streams. So much of that is too seldom enjoyed.

There are a lot of groups of people talking about ways to tackle this, particularly getting children closer to nature. Keep it up ... and keep going. In our personal way of getting out and about, we're not covering all the miles, but looking, calmly, for lone trees that act as reminders of both space and connection, that call us to attention, to a point of stillness. They embody nature's beauty and its resilience, they bear years of history, reflect seasonal shifts, and hold seeds for the future. And they get us out beyond the walls of our house and the tarmac of our street.

This weekend, we're going on a tree hunt, heading over to Torver or the Duddon Valley in search of what we hope will be the fourth of our seven trees. Whether we find the tree or not, we're confident we'll not be suffering from nature deficit disorder – quite the opposite, we intend to fill ourselves up with as much outdoor time as possible.

Read the BBC report on the National Trust and Nature Deficit Disorder (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-17495032>)

For [somewhere-nowhere](#) blog, March 2012

