New resource to record Britain's trees launched

June 18 2013

Treezilla, the monster map of trees, was launched by The Open University and partners on 14 June 2013. The citizen science project aims to map every tree in Britain through Treezilla.org and the related apps.

Treezilla is a database representing Britain's tree legacy and future, and enables scientific investigations into tree diseases, their contribution to the ecosystem, and how climate change affects tree growth and health.

Treezilla is free and open to everyone to use, and local groups are encouraged to upload data about the trees in their area. Large inventories of tree data already held by local authorities and institutions can also be uploaded to create a powerful new database. There are tens of thousands of trees from such sources already in Treezilla.

Jonathan Silvertown, Professor of Ecology at The Open University, said: "We know there are 3.8 billion trees in forests and woodlands and another 123 million elsewhere in the countryside, but no overall estimate exists of the number of urban trees, or trees on private estates. Treezilla will help us to get a more accurate picture of this important resource."

Treezilla also calculates and displays an evaluation of the monetary value of the ecosystem services that trees provide. These include capturing carbon dioxide (CO_2), reducing flood risk, reducing energy use by buildings and improving air quality in cities. These values differ according to location, size, and species, and a richly populated database

would therefore present a much more accurate picture of total benefits from trees.

David Foster, Chief Executive of The Parks Trust, said: "As custodian of many hundreds of thousands of trees in Milton Keynes, I would like to encourage people to connect with those trees and understand and appreciate them. Treezilla is a wonderful initiative to give power to the people and help achieve that."

Treezilla is part of the OpenScience Laboratory, an initiative of The Open University and The Wolfson Foundation, developed in partnership with Forest Research and Treeconomics.

More information: www.treezilla.org/

Provided by Open University

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