

# Culture Night? For Easy Treesie it's Culture Morning, Noon and Night!

Easy Treesie's impressive work continues and ORLA FARRELL recounts the latest adventures within the community nationwide

**T**HE EASY Treesie Project has a mission; to carry out the Plant-for-the-Planet challenge to plant a million trees. How? With Ireland's million school children & their communities. That's a lot to do by the deadline we have set ourselves for 2024! One of the ways we get things done with ease is by celebrating national and international special events to the full, through of course, tree planting. For example, on National Biodiversity Week, we ran 10 separate events. On Tree Week we have collaborated with up to a dozen tree planting parties nationwide. On Earth Day, World Environment Day and National Tree Day we've held multiple tree planting ceremonies, starting our warm-ups weeks beforehand so that the media will have their pictures on time! The national Culture Night event is another great chance to shine a light on

Tree Culture in as many places as we can and we find it a great opportunity to get our tree planters into the groove for Tree Day and our upcoming planting season. Story and Song and ArtisTREE are central to us in Ireland.

Even Covid lockdowns did not deter us as in 2020 we ran a five-hour event on Zoom with virtual visitors from as far away as Canada and Malawi and broadcast a new film at the same time, running in parallel on the Culture Night TV channel!

The Culture Night national event has traditionally kicked-off in the early evening since its inception. Now we teachers love to get cracking with our work to-do lists in the morning. For that great feeling of calm, it is best to get through what has to be done early in the day to make space for playtime! Recently our national Culture Night has coincided with the day of the popular youth-led Climate Marches, where we've even

brought along some trees. In previous years we have joined in with a "March of the Trees" and have participated in some poster-making in time for the lunchtime speeches. This year we chose to start our cultural day at breakfast time to accommodate our participating schools, and were most fortunate to have a glorious sunny morning for our new initiative, collaborating with One Tree Planted. What a relief, in a

week where we had experienced drenching rain that hops off the ground! Especially so since the school communities attending were coming on foot and using the public buses and since we would be getting out and about with only the trees for shelter in the grounds of historic Swords Castle!

An order for orchard trees valued at €1,000 - gosh, what would that look like? Where

would they go if they arrived early? Not in Cllr Joe' Newman's office, says Joe; (A co-founder of one of our partner organisations, the Swords Woodland Association) ; he feared he would not be able to move for trees. This was no obstacle to local nursery Tully's and a dawn delivery was made allowing just enough time to turn the splendid Fingal County Atrium into a forest of 34 towering orchard

trees. Cherry, Apple, Pear and Damson, many of the apple trees decked out in abundant autumn fruit! This was one tree for every single child attending that morning, which would be planted in the surrounding schools and community spaces.

It was in this Urban Indoor Orchard that we gathered for a welcome breakfast of tea, coffee, juice boxes and tree-fruit oatcakes. What a lovely tree-t on our arrival - Fingal County Council was thanked from the stage for this generous hospitality. Isn't it a delight to catch up while mingling again? It is now three long, Covid-filled years since we enjoyed a similar chance to socialise in these splendid surroundings. Our Tree Academy which had been scheduled to take place in the Castle Chapel and here in this building looking out on ancient evergreen oaks in March 2020 was of necessity moved online and this event was a first such chance to meet again! Many local



Mayor of Fingal Cllr. Howard Mahony addresses St. Finian's and Mary Queen of Ireland students at our Easy Treesie/ One Tree Planted/Swords Woodland Culture Night event at Fingal County Hall. PHOTO RONAN LYNCH

Below: Country Coordinators enjoy our story of Irish Tree Culture at the Plant-for-the-Planet Youth Summit, Bonn



volunteer tree-planters from organisations such as Swords Tidy Towns and the Broadmeadows Community Gardens, who have joined us lately at local plantings in public parkland sites such as Swords Manor and Donabate, had come to join in the fun.

The Easy Treesie project has worked with, among many schools around the country, Fingal schools and their communities now for several years including the two schools who sent delegations attending this bright September day. Indeed it's a joy to report that our first-ever project in Fingal won the National Tidy Towns Special Tree Award in 2022 for planting one tree for every one of their residents at the seaside town of 'Baldoyle Wild Towns'. We enjoyed presentations by teachers and pupils on the biodiversity (variety of life) they enjoy, as a result of the trees added in recent years to their school grounds and environs. A great display of smiling photographs of tree-planting, going back to our first joint event at nearby Malahide Castle, shone on the giant screen. Teacher Ciarán described hearing me, Orla Farrell, Easy Treesie founder describe the project we are carrying out to participate in the planting of a trillion trees worldwide on the radio one Saturday morning and how he had gone immediately to the easytreesie.com website to sign up his school, St. Finian's.

It was a delight to hear the children describe the remarkable new increase in plants and animals they have enjoyed since they have given nature more space. The tool kits and tree nursery boxes sponsored by the Dublin Airport Authority allows them to grow local tree-seeds into trees with guidance from Edward (our seed-saver par excellence.) Teacher Sandra was excited to report that this meant the school can now plant their own trees grown from seed at no cost whatsoever to the children. The pupils and teachers from Mary Queen of Ireland National School, which is adjacent to Dublin International Airport, were of course very pleased indeed to be bringing back several of the orchard trees to their grounds. Their school is a regular host to rabbits, foxes and of course aerial creatures, an abundance of birds and bats; indeed one small chap was able to catch a small bat in a jar which had managed to lose itself in a classroom and release it again to the wild of the school playground.

Sitting down all day, they say, is anti-health so we did what we often do; a Yoga Break for the Pose of the Tree. There was time for a quiz followed by a poe-TREE workshop using up the reverse side of the quiz pages. We are "being the change we wish to see". The children set to work instantly though



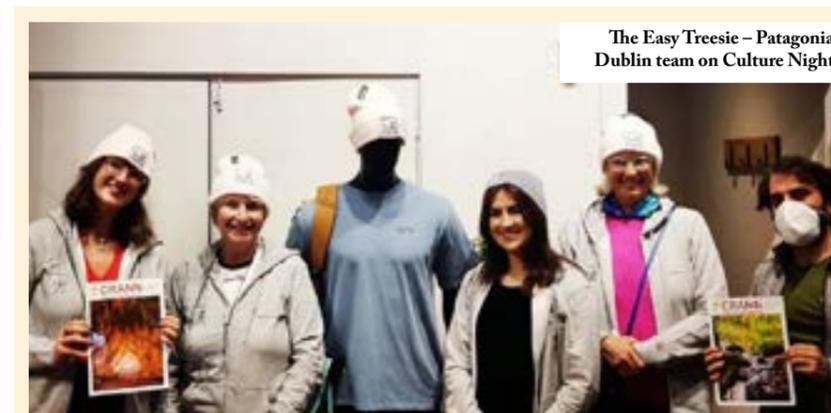
Getting serious at quiztime in the Atrium, Fingal County Hall

some extra encouragement was needed for the adults present, who were markedly more shy about their skills as poets. When the poems were read out they realised their modesty was well-placed and declared themselves glad their offerings were anonymous as they decided they did not match the standard of many of the children's works. You can read some of our poetry on the website; <http://bit.ly/3EIQHni>.

It was a lovely surprise to be joined by the Mayor of Fingal, Cllr. Howard Mahony who praised the efforts of all present in their climate actions. Mayor Mahony joins a roll of honour of distinguished public representatives who have honoured our project with a visit. (Indeed the Dublin Lord Mayor Cllr. Caroline Conroy - a great planter of trees in Ballymun and surrounds with our and her own projects - has since then accepted some Holly trees for her Tree Day Climate Action.) We were also joined by Councillors Ian Carey and Ann Graves and the presentations which ensued emphasised the importance of preserving the Green Belt around Swords. Now for Prizes, we love rewards for star efforts. Snug woollen winter beanie hats were awarded to the Mayor - who did very well in the quiz element of the programme - for which he won his new winter hat! For the children who had written and recited their poetry, graced the stage and

provided logistical backup in distributing the wonderful poster featuring champion local trees - more hats. The latest issue of Crann which features an article thanking One Tree Planted for their most valuable sponsorship of several recent tree planting projects was another welcome gift. Teachers also took back some very special almond and orange- tree chocolate which was sourced for this special

Speakers, Dr. Gerhardt Gallagher, Dr. Rory Harrington and Deirdre Lane (left to right) with participants in our IMMA Earth Rising Eco Art Festival Tree Talks and Steven Doody and son (far right), Easy Treesie's Community Liaison Officer.



The Easy Treesie - Patagonia Dublin team on Culture Night

A special thanks to all who made this Culture Night so memorable this year and to our many supporters who keep our show on the road. Here are some of their comments; thank you friends! "I participated in Easy Treesie's Culture Night exhibition in Patagonia. To speak to Orla and my fellow team members about the important work being undertaken to plant one million trees by 2024 was inspiring, and the evening provided a wonderful opportunity to meet new people passionate about saving the planet. The poetry session

was a wonderful way to round off a wonderful evening!" *Aoife McGeogh, (Easy Treesie Graduate Intern, Dublin City University)* "Enjoyed by all, our evening spent in Patagonia was the perfect start to a night full of culture. Poetry, Music and more; it made for a truly entertaining evening. With Patagonia's recent climate moves, and Easy Treesie's presence, the feeling of togetherness and unity in our fight toward a better world was evident from the atmosphere created by all involved." *Máire Dempsey, (Easy Treesie Graduate Intern,*

*Trinity College Dublin)* "The event was well organised and very enjoyable. This was the fourth Culture Night Ireland poetry reading where I have been invited to read original poems to support the important work of Easy Treesie." *Poet, Anto Kerins.* "I loved that it was in Patagonia, a brand I admire and which has been making history recently with its commitment to making the world a better place. The guitar music and fairtrade chocolate elements contributed to a great atmosphere". *Audrey Wilson, attendee.*

occasion. Chocolate is always central to our work! And the many orchard trees were waved off to their new homes. Following some refreshments all round we then sallied out to join the children in a great Green-Schools training session involving tree and tree-creature measurement in among the gnarled old castle tree canopy in the shelter of the castle curtain walls.

And now it's off to meet up with our Town team; we load up our Culture Kit including a tree in a pot who'll be in the audience and will stay there and our new slim volume of new poetry to display in the city centre store window. Artist and meteorologist Evelyn, hops into the "Leaf"-mobile and we're off to Patagonia. This amazing sustainable-apparel firm was the first ever commercial sponsor of our project with their "1% for the Planet" grant and are long-standing Crann supporters. Our new folding wheelbarrow makes short work of ferrying our gear including the tree. Unfortunately a loose nut is shaken off as we wheel along the bumps and out falls our tall apple tree, a half-dozen green apples rolling down Drury Street during a drenching shower. We gather up the runaway apples and tighten the wingnut and soon have the stage set for our Culture Night evening programme. As we wheeled in our gear, musician Arash Kazemi struck up some rousing and very appropriate renditions of many upbeat - and some thoughtful - melodies which greatly added to the relaxed and friendly ambiance. We look forward all year to hearing original poems around nature, trees, climate change and other topics on this special night. The readings were opened by Aoife McGeough, Easy Treesie Environmental Intern, reading

"Holly Picking" - very appropriate as it is this year's chosen tree for Tree Week - followed by our poet-in-residence reading his poems, "Starlings", "On the Street", "Butterfly", "Baby Artem", "Earth Kill", "The Waterfall", "Here and Now" and "The Elephant Cheers". Patagonia's team once again came up trumps supporting our climate initiative and we are especially grateful to One Tree Planted who sponsored the 34 fruit trees and some great tree-planting gear for our team, for some special tree-champions and for the school children attending Fingal County Hall. We also thank our Crann board, administration and membership, our lead sponsor, the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, who have provided the core funding for the Easy Treesie project in 2022, and our very many supporting local authorities, businesses and individuals among them the unparalleled Coillte team, Trees on the Land, our partner nurseries including English's Fruit Farm, the Loreto Order, GreenPrint Maxol for their focus on energy transition education, Docusign, and Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board. We are proud to display a detailed list of our benefactors and lots of other information about our successes to date including links to our growing film resource library on our Easy Treesie website. Our team

Orla Farrell presents Felix Finkbeiner, Founder, Plant-for-the-Planet with an Easy Treesie Hoodie and the latest Crann magazine featuring Tidy Towns Special Tree Award Winners



had the chance to regale the public throughout the day with tales of our recent successes, including

- Our camping trip to the Woodland Festival at Clonalis House where we left trees behind instead of tents and held both storytelling and singing sessions in the woods

- Our new Tree Maintenance parties with our volunteers and ongoing partnerships including with the Tree Council of Ireland, GAA Green Clubs, Northside and now Northwest Partnerships, IMMA Earth Rising and

Barretstown events with our team artist Steven Doody.

- “The Easy Treesie Story” Podcast, our new Rethink Ireland film, and our Irish delegation to our fourth COP-focused Plant-for-the-Planet Youth Summit. At the five-day conference we planted oak and cherry trees in the City of Bonn forest with youth leaders and young people selected from almost 80 countries working on this Restoration Project. We also enjoyed meetings at the UN campus and with founder, the great Felix Finkbeiner who planted the first apple tree of the now-Trillion Tree Campaign at the age of nine.



A presentation to Lord Mayor of Dublin, Cllr. Caroline Conroy of Coillte Holly with Pauline Logan, Coordinator LEO Dublin City Women In Business at the Mansion House

Dear Crann Members and Friends,

Would you like to receive native and common Irish species saplings for planting, to improve the tree canopy where you live, to support the establishment of woodlands and the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration?

Our Easy Treesie Million Trees by 2024 Project is being carried out in collaboration with Crann -Trees for Ireland, the Tree Council of Ireland, GAA Green Clubs and others.

A request for a minimum of 100 saplings can be made by schools, colleges, co-operatives and community group, by filling out the short form at this link as soon as possible and at latest by 1st February;

<https://forms.gle/Sd6uNRK9h2fr6urJ6>

Orders will be considered and successful projects will be contacted directly by the nurseries before National Tree Week in March, via the email you provide. Currently, we are not charging for the supply or delivery of saplings thanks to the generosity of our tree-mendous sponsors who have made them available for our project. We ask in return that you please share your tree planting story e.g. in your local press and using #generationrestoration #restore #easytreesie hashtags on social media if you can. We really like to thank our sponsors and helpers with a shout out!

We will do our best to provide suitable projects with saplings. It is possible that you may receive fewer trees than requested or be added to a waiting list as demand always exceeds our available supplies.

The information you provide in the form will be shared with suppliers to facilitate the direct delivery of ordered trees to the appropriate location or a nearby depot. We will also use the information for follow-up on tree survival rates. In receiving trees through us you commit to seeing to the best of your ability that your trees grow successfully by:

- planting them promptly (or potting-up/healing-in, in case of delay)
- protecting them from damage
- providing water for your trees until they are established
- picking away or trampling the weeds
- providing details for your planting site

There is a Frequently Asked Questions section on the website at this link <https://easytreesie.com/2021/01/06/faqs/> and you can contact us for any other information at [orla@easytreesie.com](mailto:orla@easytreesie.com) with National Tree Week in the subject line.

More information is available through the [www.crann.ie](http://www.crann.ie) and [www.easytreesie.com](http://www.easytreesie.com) websites - where donations to the project are of course also always welcome.

Regards,  
Orla Farrell

## THE LEAF GATHERERS

*When all the pigments glow they stand about,  
sipping beers, the breath from coloured trees,  
catching up, the craic, well-worn views.  
In-between the stream of talk the gusts  
now build to shake the boughs, off they go to  
wait with night and bear the windstorm blow.*

*Morning finds the gale upon the ground,  
leaves fill round the cul-de-sac, crinkled heaps  
hide drains and corner paths, schoolboys  
gallop through, small kids kick and leap.*

*Out they come with rakes and bags  
lifting up the leaf debris, pods of leaves,  
pack and squeeze, racing to the end of day,  
all the bags are stacked away, city truck picks  
them up, colour on the street now grey,  
trees stand bare at winter rest,  
orange sunset in the west.*

© Anto Kerins



Andreas Vandelbo

## THE SNOW DROP

*Angry rain, ugly sleet,  
driving snow, freezing feet,  
darkened days, frightful nights,  
chilling water, damp and cold,  
begging for some homeless help,  
looking for a wooden bench,  
city of a million folk,  
not a single one I know.*

*Will I go and search for food?  
Maybe find a meal for free.  
Then I see a broken fence,  
creep along and slip inside,  
no one looking from the house,  
hide within the garden shed,  
sleep all night upon the floor.*

*Morning peeps in through the door,  
glimpse a tiny snowdrop stand  
hanging over ice and snow  
with its precious head held high  
holding ground against harsh wind.*

*I feel its fragile soul  
enter me as in a trance,  
look upon my battered heart,  
soften and relax its beat,  
strengthen me within my core.*

*Life inside I'll now restore.*

© Anto Kerins



Achim Ruhman

## JANUARY

*Tightened  
down by winter's grip,  
deepest dark, primal night,  
death is lingering in the shade,  
sun neglecting all its power,  
empty trees, bitter east,  
nature hiding half  
afraid.*

*Moving,  
creaking, frozen reach,  
rolling thunder cracks the sky,  
old year's gone, shifting minds,  
wind chills, white hail flying past.  
Calendar: a framework source,  
marking nature's changing  
force.*

*Pushing up  
through ice and snow  
from the damp and musty soil  
up and through the winter's cold  
comes the roots and stems that coil  
round about the stones and grit  
building life inside the earth  
January rises  
forth.*

© Anto Kerins

## STARLINGS

*Countless of them, watch them gather,  
rushing, dashing, all together,  
surging, sweeping through the air,  
flowing over empty fields,  
billowing beneath the clouds,  
bending as they break and border,  
high and low they race and go,  
watching others makes them follow,  
wheeling while they form a shape  
sometimes it's an endless corner  
then appears a moving eight,  
all the time a million flutters  
whirring echoes as they curve  
diving downwards at the ground  
next they roll and turn away,  
keep it going while they can,  
daylight dies behind the hill,  
suddenly they all slow down,  
finding branches, roosting perches,  
chatter noises, crush of others,  
listen while they fall asleep  
sheltered by the rising dark.*

© Anto Kerins



Phil Baum

Anto Kerins is a conservationist, educationalist and writer and a member of An Taisce's Natural Environment Committee. He writes poetry on nature and other topics.

He has read his poetry at Culture Night Ireland each year since 2019 in support of the important work of Easy Treesie and Crann.

One of the most dramatic events in nature is a starling murmuration. This is a swooping mass of thousands, sometimes tens of thousands of birds whirling in the sky in the evening before they roost for the night. We are still not certain why they do it – maybe it's just for the fun, the company and the togetherness.