

PRESS RELEASE

Every tree-vote matters! Candidates for the 2022 European Tree of the Year title!

(BRUSSELS, February 1st, 2022) — **The voting has started today and during the whole month of February people will choose their favourite trees with inspiring stories in the 2022 European Tree of the Year (ETY) contest. We are happy to announce that 16 countries have successfully concluded their national contests and their winning trees have nominated for the European round of the contest. You can vote online at www.treeoftheyear.org.**

During the whole last year, we have seen many activities around tree planting in the EU, many discussions and serious debates organized by different organizations. We have also joined the debates with our “**Planting for the Future**” conference in March 2021. Although the debates were useful and fruitful we could see one aspect generally missing – the **care for trees that already stand** in our cities and have been planted since centuries in our villages and landscapes and we realized the great importance of our ETY contest, which highlights the role of ancient trees in our communities and underlines the importance of tree care.

“This year we will organize a second edition of the Planting4Future conference as we perceive the importance of the topic. Data on plantations, motivation of key planting actors to share the data, how to involve all member states, carbon offsetting as one of the motivators for participation of companies in tree planting, offsetting into regenerative agriculture, forestry or carbon farming and realistic expectations from carbon sequestration in various ecosystems, these will be the main issues discussed during the conference. The P4F conference is going to be crowned by the Award Ceremony of the ETY 2022. This time we plan a traditional “on-site” event, so wish us luck,” says **Josef Jary** from the **Czech Environmental Partnership Foundation (CEPF)**, the main organizer of ETY and P4F.

Our patron and ambassador of the ETY contest, MEP **Luděk Niedermayer** on the importance of public involvement in tree-care and tree-planting initiatives: *“Trees provide shelter during hot weather, filter dust, improve air and soil quality. We take trees for granted, as well as the benefits they bring us. But it shouldn't be a matter of course. Every tree deserves our care because that decides whether the newly planted and much-needed trees will survive. The European Tree of the Year contest shines a light on this every year across Europe. People gather around their national tree winners, learning about the benefits and history of trees, which are here often longer than we do. Thanks to that, the people are motivated to get involved in planting and caring for trees. And this is something that our nature - and society - dearly needs.”*

In 2022 we have again a variety of trees going to compete for the tree title. This time we have many **trees with personalities and occupations** like guardians, revolutionary, singers and weepers, writers, harbours, sculptures, teachers and supervisors and even a modern woman. All this can become our trees. Do you also realize that our relations to trees become more personal when we get really close to them?

Standings in the European Tree of the Year contest will become secret as the vote enters its final phase — from **22nd to 28th of February**. This way, fans and supporters will not know the winner until the final announcement is made. Winners will be announced at the **Award Ceremony on March 22nd following the „Planting4Future” conference in Brussels** (you can also watch the Award Ceremony and P4F conference on-line on our [EPA YT channel](#)).

Media info:

[Download the tree pictures here](#)

Milestones:

- 1.–28. 2. 2022: Public voting on www.treeoftheyear.org
- 22.–28. 2. 2022: Secret voting (hidden numbers of votes)
- 22. 3. 2022: Hybrid – Online/onsite conference „Planting4Future“ followed by the ETY Award Ceremony in Brussels

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Finalists of the European Tree of the Year 2022

| Name | Country | Tree story |
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| The Giant Sequoia of the Collège Notre Dame de Bonlieu | Belgium | The redwood is the emblematic tree of the Collège Notre-Dame du Bonlieu. It sits in the honorary entrance of the College, it has welcomed and still welcomes thousands of students. Some group photos were taken at the foot of this majestic tree. He was depicted in a comic strip by an iconic Belgian author. This redwood is an important tree for the city of Virton, the school and its students because it participates in the wooded heritage and biodiversity it hosts. |
| Grandpa Kolyo's tree | Bulgaria | The oak is named after the owner of the field where it grows – Nikola Angelov, known as Grandpa Kolyo. After hard work he would rest under its thick shade. Legend has it that the tree was part of a dense forest, located where the village lies today. Because of the forest and the river, its first residents settled there and founded the village. They were Bulgarians, hiding from the Turkish forays. This old oak is a symbol of Studena and a pillar of the Bulgarian spirit and faith of its residents. |
| The giant sequoia from Slatina | Croatia | The giant sequoia tree in Slatina is the only protected specimen of its kind in Croatia. It is among the oldest in Europe and is protected as a natural monument in Croatia. One of the most aristocratic European families, the Schaumburg-Lippes, followed the 19th century horticultural trends by planting this sequoia. The oldest redwoods were also planted at this time in England, outside their natural habitat. The giant redwood tree is part of the EPIcentar Sequoia Slatina which is a new tourist oasis in Slatina's town center. |
| The Singing Lime | The Czech Republic | The Singing (or the Lukas) Lime is one of the oldest and biggest trees in the Czech Republic. Legend has it that at the end of 17th century an old hard of hearing man was hiding inside the hollow trunk, singing loudly while transcribing forbidden psalms. Passersby thought the tree itself was singing. People draw its energy or look for inspiration which the tree has become to many artists. They pay it back by their care like when it was damaged by a wood-decay fungus or struck by lightning. Today its descendants grow not only in Czech but also abroad. |
| The King`s Pine | Estonia | The majestic King's Pine grows in Järvselja, Southern Estonia. It sprouted at the same time that King Gustavus Adolphus II of Sweden founded the University of Tartu, about 380 years ago. Hundreds of Estonian biologists, |

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| | | foresters and students of other specialties, whose academic education has typically included internships in Järvelja research forests, recognize the tree well. It is a symbolic tree, the powerful sturdy trunk of which is a monument to Estonian forestry and nature education. |
| I am Tilia | The Netherlands | I am Tilia, a vibrant, modern woman in the bloom of my life, only 150 years young. Rooted in my local community, I reach out to the world, being the first tree in history with an Instagram account. Over 3.000 followers from London to Teheran view my journey through the seasons, one picture at a time. Planted at the beginning of the carbon emission age, I have a deep concern for climate change: I don't eat meat, I don't fly, I even absorb CO2. I am climate proof and great for biodiversity. I live and breathe for generations to come. #iamtilia |
| The Multiseclar Sweet Chestnut of Audran Square | France | Remembrance of vast woods and pastures, the most famous Chestnut Tree of the city of La Celle Saint-Cloud is not very high, because its branches use to be cut to make stakes. But over three centuries, it has spread its amazing wide silhouette and twisted its trunk's bark, a real sculpture today. He was a lonely tree in the middle of his meadow, but the city has grown all around! The country tree has become a very popular urban tree, today the central piece of a square, redeveloped especially to showcase this little treasure. |
| The weeping sophoras of the Csokonai Theater in Debrecen | Hungary | The Csokonai Theater in Debrecen was opened on 7 October, 1865. The trees in front of the building are 100 years old and they have a huge vaulted crown canopy. They often looked through the windows of the theatre, and every night they had something to talk about. They looked behind the scenes, saw thousands of successes and failures, experienced periods of need and glittering years. Our trees are curiosities in Hungary as well, they are under local protection, the people in Debrecen love and protect them. |
| Age Grand Oak | Latvia | After the Soviet occupation our family regained grandfather's farmlands. We found a mighty oak standing firm on the bank of river Aģe. We cleared it of bushes and named Aģe Grand Oak. It inspired to realise that Latvia has the second largest density of grand trees in Europe. Now the oak is starting point of the Poweroak hike and it has inspired to plant a new Poweroak grove. Aģe Grand Oak has become a popular tree in Limbaži region. With the awakening of the Latvian nation, this oak tree has opened up to the world to rejoice, educate and inspire! - Ivars Smits caregiver of Age Grand oak |
| Chestnut of the hundred horses | Italy | This chestnut is thought to be over 3,000 years old. It is composed of three large stems that perhaps the same root system. If so, it would also be the largest tree in the world. Legend has it that Queen Joan of Aragon took shelter with all her knights under the branches of this huge tree following a storm. Since then the chestnut, also visited by Goethe and many other writers and artists, has been called "The chestnut of 100 horses". |
| Guardian of the Białowieża Primeval Forest | Poland | Oak tree is growing at the edge of the Białowieża Primeval Forest, one of the most known lowland forests, not only in Poland but also in Europe. It has been particularly respected and admired by local people as well as tourists visiting this area of Poland, called the European Region of Wisent. It is an inspiration for many artists. It amazes in every season – during full vegetation but also when it is showing its leafless, mysteriously curved branches. |
| The Big Cork Oak | Portugal | Vale do Pereiro, in the municipality of Arraiolos, is a small village whose surrounding area corresponds to the typical Alentejo landscape. Among its paths stands "The Big Cork Oak" which, due to its size, harbors life, awakens feelings and surprises us with the diameter of the canopy and the way it is loved, esteemed and known by the community. In the summer, under its shade, shelters men and animals, harbouring the workers field lunch and giving way to the herds. |
| The Turgenev oak | Russia | The famous oak of the Spasskoye-Lutovinovo estate, which is inextricably linked to the name of Ivan Turgenev, unfortunately, was lost during the storm, but remained in people's memory as a natural and historical symbol, a legendary tree that kept the warmth of the great Russian writer's hands. |

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| | | Turgenev Oak, planted according to legend by Ivan Sergeevich himself, has played witness to remarkable historical events and lives of famous personalities. It still remains an embodiment of strength, beauty, and longevity, a connecting link between past and future generations, a symbol of love for the country! |
| Umbrella from High Tatras | Slovakia | Now it's impossible to find out who planted the tree - it was probably in the 1950s by students from the Horticultural School in Lednice in Moravia during the "Great Cleaning". And since the unusual sloping building of the Mountain Rescue Service grew up in the center of Starý Smokovec, the tree found itself under the protective wings of all members who even saved it from being cut down. Although it is the most common tree in Europe, it is unique in the High Tatras. And there is definitely only one looks like this. |
| Oak of Conxo's Banquet Forest | Spain | This historic oak was born with the Enlightenment. He was a witness in 1856 of the Democratic Banquet of Conxo, a revolutionary act that vindicated the ideals of the new Europe: Liberty, Equality and Fraternity. It was defended by Rosalía de Castro in a pioneering ecological complaint in Spain. And the forest that welcomes it, at the foot of the Portuguese Pilgrimage Trail, is today a whole botanical chest, open to the public in 2018 (with a great popular festival) after remaining inaccessible for more than a century. |
| Kippford Leaning Tree | The United Kingdom | The tree on the coast of Dumfries & Galloway is a fine example of a mature hawthorn tree. While not spectacular in size, it cuts a striking presence as the only tree on the windswept cockle shell beach. The hawthorn has been enjoyed by three generations of one local Dalbeattie family. It's been climbed on, battered by the winds and even bumped into by cars turning. Yet still it survives and stands strong and proud on the edge of the beach. |

The **Environmental Partnership Association (EPA)** is a leading environmental organisation established for almost 30 years in Central and Eastern Europe. With a team of 80 employees, the EPA operates in 6 countries via its 6-member foundations in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania and Slovakia. The EPA boasts 30-years of experience in project coordination and carrying out activities oriented to changing people's mind-sets in order to protect and improve the environment.

www.environmentalpartnership.org

The European Landowners' Organisation (ELO), created in 1972, is a unique federation of national associations from the 28 EU Member States and beyond, which represents the interests of landowners, land managers and rural entrepreneurs at the European political level. Independent and non-profit making, the ELO is the only organisation able to stand for all rural entrepreneurs. The ELO promotes a prosperous countryside through private property dynamism. Its Secretariat is based in Brussels

www.europeanlandowners.org

The **European Tree of the Year** is a contest that highlights the significance of trees in the natural and cultural heritage of Europe and the importance of the ecosystem services trees provide. The contest is not looking for the most beautiful tree, but for a tree with a story, a tree rooted in the lives and work of the people and the community that surrounds it.

www.treeoftheyear.org

THE CONTEST IS ORGANISED BY



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