

PRESS RELEASE

Regardless Covid-19 restrictions, fourteen candidates compete for 2021 European Tree of the Year title!

(BRUSSELS, January 29th, 2021) — During the whole month of February people have again an opportunity to choose a tree with the most astonishing story in the European Tree of the Year contest. We are happy to announce that 14 out of our 16 partners successfully concluded their national contest despite all the restrictions and we will have the pleasure to see their pictures and read their stories and most importantly to vote for them. Online voting will be open on Monday the 1st of February at www.treeoftheyear.org.

*“This year again, you will have the opportunity to see a high number of veteran trees among our finalists. It should only remind us that to become a grown tree takes time. Time, which starts with simple act – tree is planted or sown. Last year we have presented you our Czech campaign, [Planting our Future](#) which aims to plant ten million trees. This year we will combine the ETY Award Ceremony with a working conference on **how to plant the additional 3 billion trees in Europe** and fulfil the ambitious target of EU,”* says Josef Jary from the [Environmental Partnership Association \(EPA\)](#).

Our patron and ambassador of the ETY contest, MEP and natural scientist Michal Wiezik comments already on the Commissions' tree-planting initiative: *“Planting three billion trees, what a marvellous goal! Unfortunately, it can easily end up as a catastrophe. Huge effort resulting in a huge collapse of plantations and decline in already badly shaped biodiversity. Alternatively, it can turn out to be a great success, improving our landscapes, providing nesting sites for birds and insects and delivering on the adaptation to climate change. All we need is to follow several golden rules, starting with an effective protection of already existing forests and standing trees. If we fail to deliver, our planting activities will represent just a futile effort to slow down our defeat. It is all about Life.”*

In 2021 we have again a variety of trees going to compete for the tree title. We have veteran trees like **The thousand-year-old plane tree of Curinga**, the Italian candidate and the largest plane tree in the country, **The Millennial Carrasca of Lecina**, a mystical tree from Spain, or **Ancient Oak from Drnava**, located next to the former grounds of Count Andrásy's famous iron-plant.

The list of old trees continues with **The Ancient Sycamore Tree** from Russia, with its story connected to the great commander of the East, Nadir-shah, or **The Old Mulberry** from Bulgaria with the story of Stefan Karadzha – renowned national revolutionary.

The ancient Mother Tree from Netherland is supposed to be the mother of all linden trees in the city of Etten-Leur, standing on the market square and being part of society for 345 years as well as **The Eldest Resident of Medulin - Chocolate Tree of our Memories**, which keeps providing magical chocolate berries to local children like a loving mother.

This year we can also celebrate the extreme capacity of trees to survive under very harsh conditions. **The Four-Trunked Survivor** the Belgian candidate from Ypre is a real master and star among the survival trees being unique remnant from pre-war Ypres. Originally, solitary rowan tree from UK **The Survivor Tree**, no longer stands alone and is a symbol of the 20-year journey to revive the wild heart of Southern Scotland when accompanied by over half a million other native Scottish trees.

The youngest candidate is the **Apple tree near Lidmans** a truly European tree, as evidenced by the fact that this variety Reneta blenheim was bred at the birthplace of Winston Churchill. Most probably, the largest candidate is the French **The Pouplic** believed to be the incarnation of a nymph, daughter of the sun, who mourned for her dead brother by the river.

If you want to see a real explosion of flowers, then **The Judas Tree on the Church Hill of Mélykút** must be your favourite. Countless seedlings from it live in the gardens of people all around the world. An unusual beauty, **the Saint Jan Nepomucen's Linden**, given its name due the shrine of saint Jan Nepomucen standing close, surprises and inspires admiration for nature's power. There is no other linden tree like this!

Finally, the birthplace of local football club, associations and brass bands - **Plane Tree of Rossio**, the largest plane tree on the Iberian Peninsula continues to amaze admirers and inspiring artists.

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 on-line **Award Ceremony on March 17th during the „Planting for the Future: 3 billion trees in Europe“ conference**.

[Download the tree pictures here](#)

Milestones:

- **1.–28. 2. 2021: Public voting on www.treeoftheyear.org**
- **22.–28. 2. 2021: Secret voting (hidden numbers of votes)**
- **17. 3. 2021: Online conference „Planting for the Future: 3 billion trees in Europe“ accompanied by the ETY Award Ceremony**

Media Contacts:

Josef Jary, Contest coordinator: josef.jary@nap.cz — (+32) 493 84 35 01

Finalists of the European Tree of the Year 2020

Name	Country	Tree story
The Four-Trunked Survivor	Belgium	During the First World War the city of Ypres was totally destroyed, but the root stump of this tree remained alive there. From the base of the trunk 4 new side trunks grew up spontaneously. They also survived the Second World War, when Ypres was cold and almost all trees were cut down to firewood. Thus the Four-trunked Chestnut became a unique survivor from pre-war Ypres. This living monument, with a trunk base of no less than 9.10 meters in circumference, now symbolizes the force of survival, located next to the world famous Menin Gate.
The Old Mulberry	Bulgaria	The Old Mulberry has proudly stood for centuries at the central town square – now a public garden. It brings together young and old people to pass time

		together and enjoy the tree and a fountain. Back in time, near the veteran tree was the town pub. The centuries have passed the story of Stefan Karadzha – renowned national revolutionary. He outwitted the head of the local administrative unit by succeeding to hide in this much visited and noticeable pub, during a chase by the Ottoman army unit.
The Eldest Resident of Medulin - Chocolate Tree of our Memories	Croatia	Years fly by, she says. The town square was always alive, with a market, dances and centuries-old traditions as the Carnival Prince burning or ritual May thefts. Today she enjoys a good movie or play, swaying at summer concerts, singing for Christmas. Then she really dresses up to spend time with locals and guests. Above all she loves children's play and laughter, she'll treat them to magical chocolate berries in the future too. So we are told by the eldest resident of Medulin, the town square Nettle Tree.
Apple tree near Lidmans	The Czech Republic	The apple tree in the garden of the Lidman pub in Machovská Lhota quietly witnesses the stories of the people. It provides shade in the summer and fruits in the autumn. Not only to locals but also to visitors who came for the beauty of the Table Mountains and nature found on the Czech-Polish border. She has witnessed the birth of many loves, first meetings, weddings, festivities as well as sad events. The tree is a part of local life. For those in the Czech countryside, fruit trees are a symbol of tradition, because many people have apple trees in their gardens and harvest the fruit for strudel, juice or apple cider. However, the apple tree near Lidman is also a truly European tree, as evidenced by the fact that this variety Reneta blenheim was bred at the birthplace of Winston Churchill.
The ancient Mother Tree	The Netherlands	As a symbol for gathering and meeting The Mother Tree on the market square of Etten-Leur has been part of society for 345 years. Wear, tear and lots of attention through the ages gave it its striking appearance. Rooted in the heart of people, this linden tree is a silent witness to 1001 stories, emotions and events. Arguments were settled and young love blossomed under its long branches. It even inspired the later world famous painter Vincent van Gogh. Everyone, of any age, loves this green pearl!
The Poupie	France	Fondly nicknamed The Poupie for 2 centuries, this black poplar is huge for France (girth 9.6m and 38m high). Last of old poplars, soul of the village, her gold leaves adorns it's coat of arms. She is said to be the incarnation of a nymph, daughter of the sun, who mourned for her dead brother by the river. The Poupie was a sentinel during WW1, soldiers watching the enemy from her heights. Located on a buildable private site and weakened by a fire, villagers wish to protect her for many more years.
The Judas Tree on the Church Hill of Mélykút	Hungary	The tree was planted in 1750 by Franciscan monks from Subotica on a hill in the north side of the church that was being built in the village at the time. It is a miracle that this Mediterranean species is still alive there. Its spring blooming is admired by everyone and has become a symbol of the settlement. Countless seedlings from it live in the gardens of people from Mélykút, thus connecting the past with the present and the settlement with its former inhabitants around the world.
The thousand-year-old plane tree of Curinga	Italy	The Curinga plane tree is located in a very unusual position: overlooking the Tyrrhenian Sea, it juts out over a small stream. From the height of its majesty, this "guardian" seems to lovingly watch over the forest. It is thought to be planted by Basilian monks who arrived in Calabria more than a thousand years ago and that built the hermitage of Sant'Elia, but its trunk may be even older. Its trunk is completely hollow and has an opening more than 3 metres

		wide; whoever enters it has the feeling of being inside an incredible woody cave. Thanks to the huge size of its circumference it is now the largest plane tree in Italy.
Saint Jan Nepomucen's Linden	Poland	According to an ancient Polish custom a linden would be planted when a daughter was born. This is how our linden was planted 170 years ago or maybe was it on birds' merit? The tree is standing at the verge of the village close to the fields. Nothing was standing in her way thus she grew her branches wide (25 m). She became a benefactress giving shadow to those who worked in the field, a place to rest for trekkers and nectar for the bees. The shrine of saint Jan Nepomucen standing close by has given an air of magic to the place. Its unusual beauty surprises and inspires admiration for nature's power. There is no other linden tree like this!
Plane Tree of Rossio	Portugal	Planted in 1838, it's the largest in the Iberian Peninsula. Majestic in size, its trunk has a perimeter of 7 m, and its treetop has a diameter of 37 m. It's Portalegre's ex-libris. It houses, in its long and sturdy branches, years and years of collective memories and endless secrets. It has been a place of meetings, the birthplace of clubs, associations and brass bands. This Plane continues, with great resilience, to amaze admirers, listening to lonely confessions and inspiring artists.
Ancient Sycamore Tree	Russia	The Ancient East is full of secrets and legends. According to a legend, the great commander of the East, Nadir-shah, looked after the sprouts of the sycamore tree that adorned the territory of the Juma mosque in ancient Derbent. Admiring the mighty giant the writer, Aleksandr Bestuzhev-Marlinsky, composed his works. Today the majestic patriarch adorns the central part of the house of worship, being a symbol of power, one of the places of attraction for the people of Dagestan and guests of the Republic. They create legends about it, poetize it, and depict it in paintings.
Ancient Oak from Drnava	Slovakia	The old oak is located next to the former grounds of Count Andrassy's famous iron-plant in Drnava. It was here in the 1940s that the structural parts of the famous Chain Bridge "Lánchíd" in Budapest were cast, for which the village earned the nickname "Kis Pest"- Little Pest. Today the tree is one of the stops on the nature trail on the old trade route and has been an integral symbol of the village for several generations. There is mention of the stout oak in the municipal chronicle as early as 1670.
The Millennial Carrasca of Lecina	Spain	Legend tells of the times when witches populated the Guara Mountains's, where they danced and celebrated around the holm oak. A thousand years later, its this union with people that continues to be the cause for why the holm oak still stands in the small town of Alto Aragón with only 13 inhabitants. The neighbors chose it and continue to choose it for their celebrations. It is surprising because of its proximity to the houses whilst being such an old tree and yet it is so alive; the secret will surely be the care and company of Lecina's neighbors and those witches.
The Survivor Tree	The United Kingdom	Borders Forest Trust based its slogan: "Where one tree survives, a million trees will grow," on a lone rowan clinging to a stream bank in Carrifran Valley. Today that survivor tree is lonely no more! It is surrounded by a little forest of its children and In addition to its own children, the rowan tree now has over half a million other native Scottish trees for company. The rowan tree no longer stands alone and is a symbol of the 20-year journey to revive the wild heart of Southern Scotland.

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



SUPPORT



NATIONAL CONTEST ORGANISERS

