

## CASE STUDY 06

# woodlands and tourism

### Westonbirt Arboretum, Gloucestershire

The arboretum is a popular tourist attraction, best known perhaps for its displays of autumn colour focused on the national collection of maples. These attracted over 18,000 people on one Sunday in October. However, the arboretum has many other facets that demonstrate a truly multifunctional nature. As well as being a beautiful place it champions biodiversity, encourages healthy living, involves the community, helps people learn and have fun and assists the rural economy of Gloucestershire.

Near Tetbury, Westonbirt covers 240 hectares and has woodland, specimen trees and open areas. It is also a Grade 1 listed landscape with over 3,700 types of trees and shrubs and over 18,000 individual specimens are listed. The biggest is a giant redwood at 45m tall and the oldest is a small leaved lime, estimated to be 2,000 years old. The arboretum is managed by the Forestry Commission.

Westonbirt has developed a wide range of activities and events, ranging from summer classical music concerts to Tai Chi, as well as education programmes, practical craft teaching, a plant centre and shop and an illuminated trail walk for the winter. The arboretum welcomes over 350,000 paying visitors a year and has a friends group with over 17,000 members who support the work of the arboretum. Over 10,000 children's visits are made each year focused on environmental learning.

Westonbirt plays an important role in national and international biodiversity and conservation and contains 100 Red Data Book threatened species. It works to support the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation.

New buildings (the Great Oak Hall and the Maples Restaurant) have been constructed using local timber, reducing 'timber miles' and the consumption of fossil fuel.



*Above:* Education group at Westonbirt  
*Below:* Classical concert event at Westonbirt  
PHOTOS: FORESTRY COMMISSION

