

STUMPS

Stumps are a simple, sustainable readily available element to add interest to school grounds. They can be various heights and dimensions and positioned for a variety of functions or simply left loose in the grounds.

Definition

Schools most frequently opt for a cut of the tree trunk to give a moveable stump measuring around 30 -45cm diameter and 30 - 40 cm tall. However, the remnants of a fallen tree can be a valuable resource for the grounds simply due to the biodiversity which the rooted, standing dead wood attracts. Using stumps with some of the roots intact but dried out can be a great stimulus for children's imagination as not only invertebrates get into the nooks and crannies but fairies and pixies as well! They can look fantastic adorned with wild flowers and ivy growing over them.

Procedure

When introducing stumps involve the children in devising a simple code of conduct so that everyone can enjoy themselves without coming to harm. Examples might include no throwing, safe carrying, nothing above head height and rolling heavy stumps. Encourage children to report splits and sharp sections so that these can be repaired or removed. Sturdy stumps should last a long time and even when the rot sets in deadwood is far from dead...providing a habitat for a wide and varied range of invertebrates which in turn are a food source for many vertebrates.



Tips

- Chose a wood type to avoid heavy sap or excessive degradation
- The stumps can be grouped in a circle and used as a gathering space for outdoor learning.



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