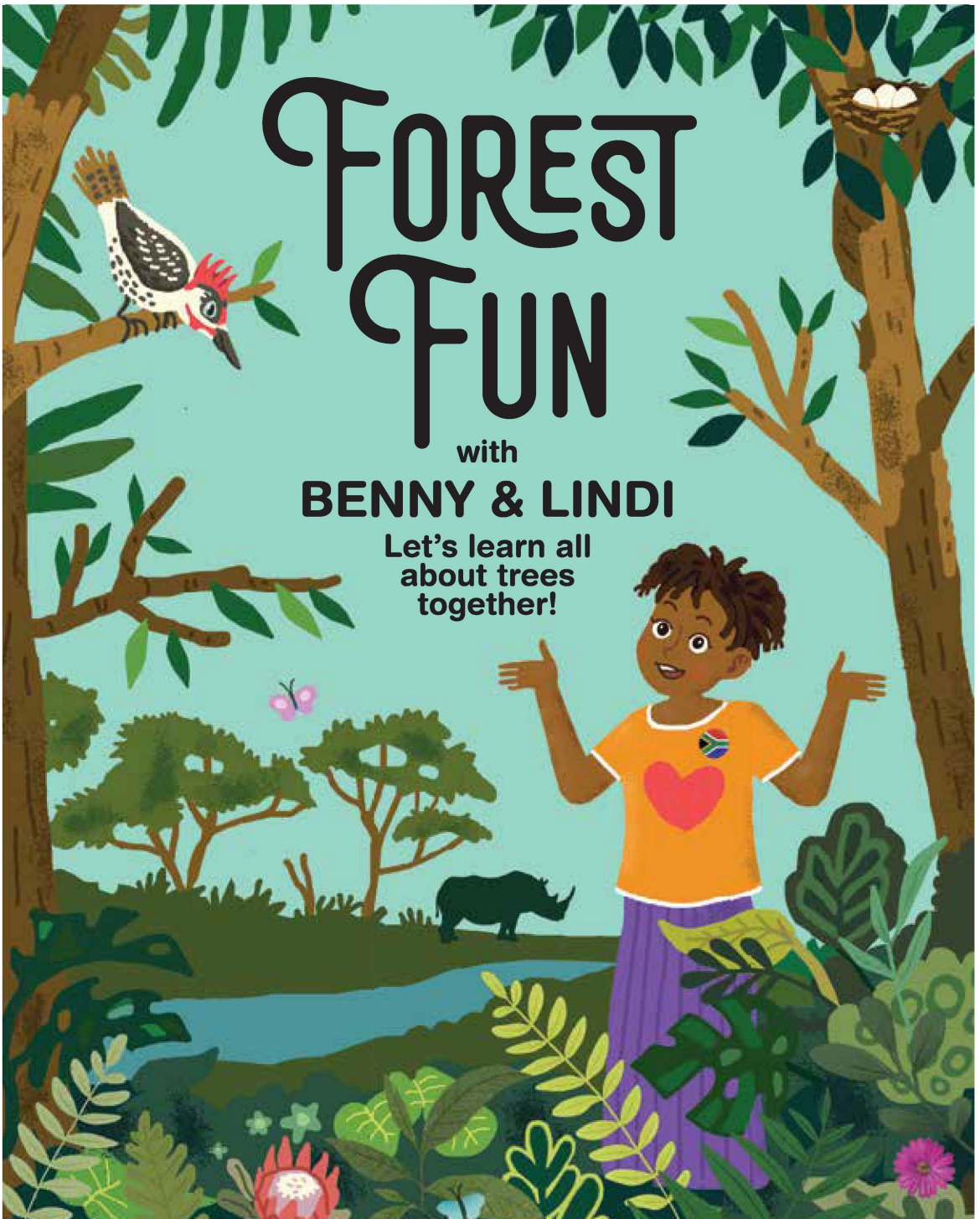


# FOREST FUN

with  
**BENNY & LINDI**

Let's learn all  
about trees  
together!



forestry, fisheries  
& the environment

Department:  
Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



To learn more about  
Forestry Management,  
visit [www.dffe.gov.za](http://www.dffe.gov.za)



**This booklet is brought  
to you by the Department  
of Forestry, Fisheries and  
the Environment**





# CONTENTS

<b>Why trees are important</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Why trees are good for the environment</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Types of trees</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>The history of forestry in South Africa</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>What is an invasive species? What is a protected tree?</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>The Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Forests in South Africa</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>Finding the right balance</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Man-made forests</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>How we can use our forests</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Indigenous forests and woodlands</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>How we can protect our forests</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Social importance of forests</b>	<b>13</b>		
<b>Economic importance of forests</b>	<b>15</b>		



# FOREST FUN

with

**BENNY & LINDI**

Let's learn all  
about trees  
together!





**Hi, I'm Benny.  
I'm a Bennett's  
Woodpecker and I  
live in a tree in  
the forest.**

**BENNY**

**LINDI**



**Hi, I'm Lindi.  
I love trees and  
want to know all  
about them!**

# WHY TREES ARE IMPORTANT



## Nature's Medicine

Certain trees are used to heal illnesses and wounds.



## Food for All

They provide food for humans, animals and insects.



## Keeping Warm and Cooking

They provide firewood for keeping warm and cooking food.




## Building and Crafting

They are used for building structures and making useful tools.



## Soil Protectors

They keep soil from washing away.



**Hi Benny!**  
**I really love trees.**  
**Can you tell me why**  
**they're so important**  
**to us?**

**Great question**  
**Lindi! There are many**  
**reasons why trees are**  
**important to people**  
**and nature.**



**Natural**  
**Shade**  
**Providers**

**They shelter us from**  
**the sun's strong rays.**



**Trees help**  
**us breathe**

**They take in carbon**  
**dioxide and release**  
**oxygen.**

# TYPES OF TREES



## Seasonal

Trees can be divided into two groups based on how they change with the seasons. Evergreen trees keep their green leaves all year round.

Deciduous trees lose their leaves in winter.



**Benny, there are so many trees in the world. Can they be sorted into different types?**



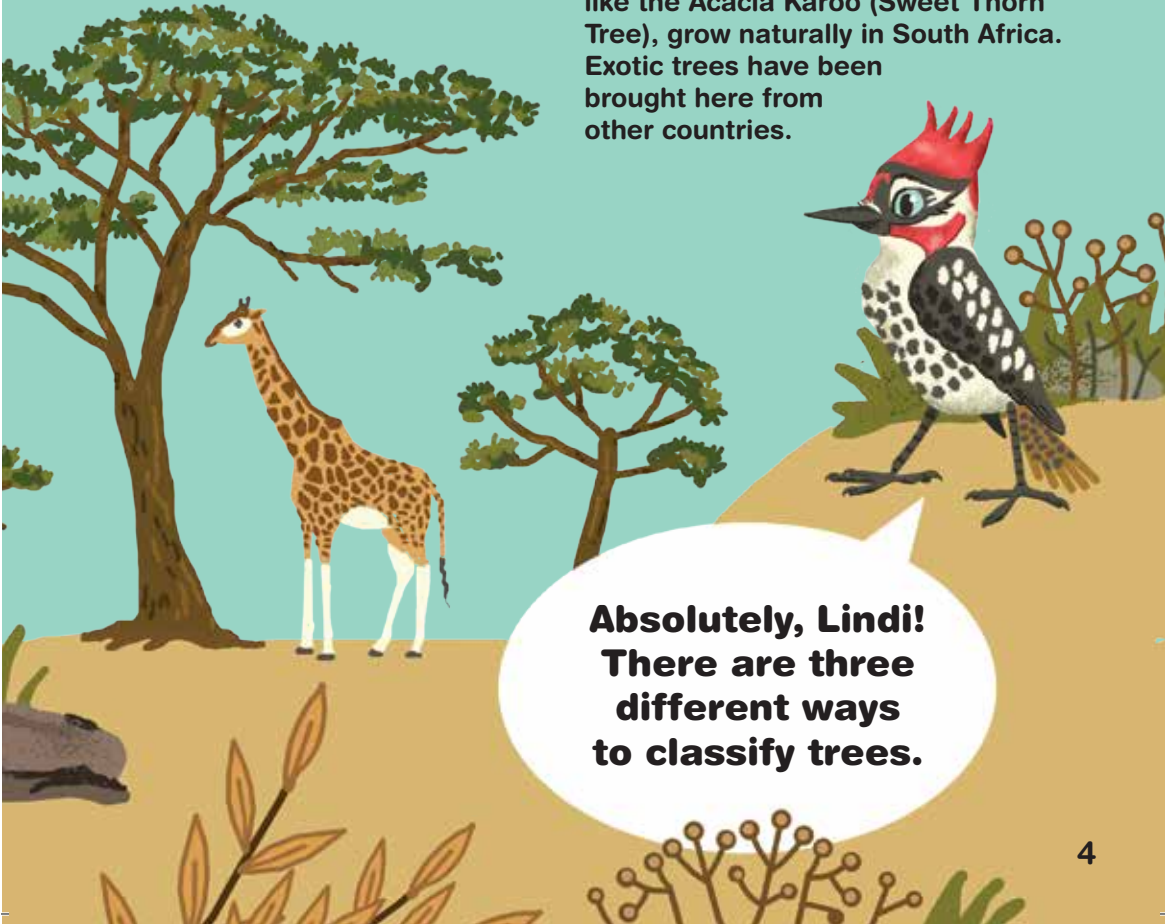
# Botanical

Trees can also be divided into two major types: Hardwoods (also known as broad-leaved trees) produce flowers and fruits. Softwoods (such as conifers) don't produce flowers but grow their seeds in cones.



# Origin

Trees are also classified by where they come from. Indigenous trees, like the Acacia Karoo (Sweet Thorn Tree), grow naturally in South Africa. Exotic trees have been brought here from other countries.



**Absolutely, Lindi!  
There are three  
different ways  
to classify trees.**

# What is an invasive species?

Invasive species are plants, trees or animals from other places that spread quickly in new areas where they don't naturally belong. For example, invasive trees like the Port Jackson in the Western Cape and Red Sesbania grow fast and can take over areas and push out local plants. This can make farming more difficult, increase fire risks, and use up a lot of water.



Port Jackson

**Some protected trees include the *Baobab*, *Camel Thorn*, *Stinkwood* and *Wild Teak*.**



Red Sesbania



# What is a protected tree?



Baobab  
Tree

Protected trees are trees or tree species that laws help to keep safe. This means you can't cut them down, damage or remove them without permission. Sometimes, a whole province might decide to protect all of its trees to help take care of the environment.



# FORESTS IN SOUTH AFRICA



**Forests are more than just trees. They are vital for the health of the planet and the survival of all living things. If we take care of forests and manage them sustainably, they will continue to offer important benefits for us and future generations.**

## **Did you know?**

**Forests are home to 70% of the world's land animals and plants.**

•

**The Sagole Baobab is believed to be the biggest tree in South Africa. Located in Venda, Limpopo, this impressive tree is over 2000 years old and is being protected from extinction.**

•

**September is Arbour Month in South Africa. It's when we raise awareness about the importance of trees, and encourage South Africans to protect indigenous forests and prevent veld fires.**

•

**The Yellowwood Tree is South Africa's national tree.**



A photograph of a pine forest with sunlight filtering through the trees. The trees are tall and thin, with a dense canopy of green needles. The ground is covered in brown pine needles and some green moss. The lighting is warm and golden, suggesting late afternoon or early morning. The text "MAN-MADE FORESTS" is overlaid in white, stylized font.

# MAN-MADE FORESTS



# What are man-made forests?

The large plantations across South Africa are all man-made forests. Typically, each tree in these forests, like the pine plantations around Sabie, was planted by hand. Most towns and cities also have trees that residents have planted over the years. These green spaces in urban areas can even be thought of as urban forests.

# INDIGENOUS FORESTS AND WOODLANDS

**Many indigenous forests are protected as State Forests or in special conservation areas. Some are also found on private properties.**





# What are Indigenous forests?

Natural high forests (indigenous forests) only cover a small part of South Africa, mostly in the southern and eastern regions. These dense forests are not planted by man. They include naturally growing indigenous trees of different sizes, as well as many other plants. They are found in areas of high rainfall and humidity, as well as sheltered mountain slopes. A great example is the Knysna forest.

# What are Indigenous woodlands?

Indigenous woodlands make up about a third of South Africa's landscape. They include tall naturally growing indigenous trees, as well as low-lying bushveld. They're not as tightly packed as high forests, so you'll usually see grass peeking out between the trees.

A famous example is the savanna in Kruger National Park.





**Forests  
provide building  
materials for  
birds' nests  
too!**

**Earning Money:** People can collect and sell forest products like extra firewood, handpicked fruits or handcrafted wooden items. This can be an essential source of income when jobs are hard to find. A special permit is needed to ensure they don't take too much.



**Food:** Forests are also a source of free food. Wild fruits and animals provide necessary nutrients, ensuring that families have enough to eat without spending extra at the shops.

# SOCIAL IMPORTANCE OF FORESTS

In South Africa, most forests are found around rural areas where jobs are scarce and development is low. This often means that people living there don't have much money. Luckily, forests are an excellent resource to help meet their daily needs.

## How forests help people

**Medicinal Plants:** Many people use plants from the forests to make traditional medicines. This helps them stay healthy without needing to buy medicines from a pharmacy.

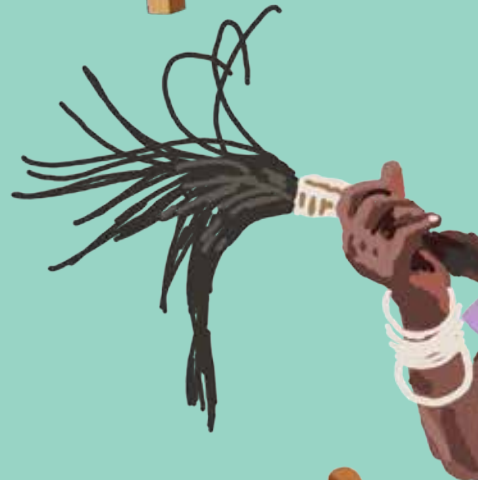
**Firewood:** Collecting firewood is essential for cooking meals and keeping homes warm, especially since it helps save on electricity bills.

**Building Materials:** The wood from trees is used for building homes and fences, providing essential materials for construction.



## Making Things from Timber

Timber is a very useful material that's used to make things like furniture and coffins. Since people always need these items, there's always a market for them. This means that the people who sell them can make a profit legally.



## The Market for Timber Poles

Timber poles are used for lots of different things, like building houses, making fences and putting up telephone lines. Sellers can focus on providing specific types of poles, like those used by telephone companies or builders.

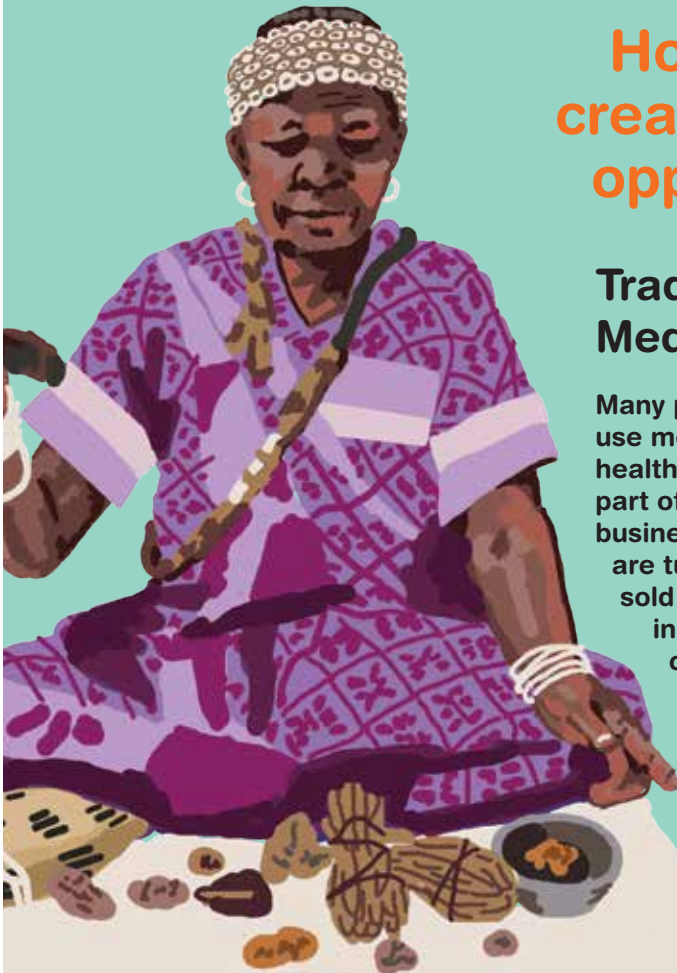


# ECONOMIC IMPORTANCE OF FORESTS

## How forests create business opportunities

### Trading Medicinal Plants

Many people in South Africa use medicinal plants to stay healthy. These plants are a big part of the herbal medicine business too. After these plants are turned into products, they're sold in stores that specialise in herbal remedies. If collected carefully and not over-harvested, these plants can provide a steady income for the people who gather and sell them.



Trees play an important role in soil reclamation, such as rehabilitating mine dumps by improving soil health and structure.



### Improving Micro-climates

Trees have a big effect on local microclimates. For example, they can enhance the thermal efficiency of buildings, making our homes cooler in summer and warmer in winter.



### Helping with Soil Reclamation



### Acting as Wind Breaks

In windy areas, trees can protect livestock, property and people by sheltering us from the wind.

# Why trees are good for the environment





### Cleaning the Air

By absorbing carbon dioxide and releasing oxygen, trees reduce harmful gases in the atmosphere and purify the air we breathe.



### Promoting Biodiversity

Trees attract birds and other wildlife to residential areas. This helps increase the variety of life around us and enriches our local ecosystems.

**Trees are very important to nature and the places people live.**



### Beautifying Our Spaces

Trees enhance the beauty of our surroundings, making our homes and residential areas nicer to look at.



Eucalyptus  
branch

## Mission to South Africa

In 1883, David was invited to South Africa to help the Tiny Forest Department grow and start new projects. His main job was to mark out and start forests in the Amatole Mountains, located northwest of King Williams' Town.

## Introducing New Species

David brought in different kinds of trees like eucalyptus and pines, which were new to the area. These small experiments helped figure out which trees could grow well in the Eastern Cape.



## Promoting Growth

David pushed for well-planned forest management to quickly grow a lot of high-quality timber. This was really important in areas where the natural forests grew slowly and were small. His efforts helped start six out of seventeen plantations in the Western Cape while he was there. He also suggested planting tree types from central Mexico and Australia in what is now called Mpumalanga – trees that are very valuable today.



## A Lasting Legacy

Thanks to his forward-thinking and hard work, David Ernest Hutchins is remembered as a pioneer in South African forestry. His efforts made a big difference to the country's natural environment, and how people work and live with forests.





David Ernest Hutchins  
South Africa's  
Forestry Pioneer

# THE HISTORY OF FORESTRY IN SOUTH AFRICA

## Early Life and Education

Born in 1850, David Ernest Hutchins grew up to be a key figure in shaping South Africa's forests. He wasn't just any forester, he studied at the renowned Ecole Nationale des Eaux et Forets in Nancy, France, where he learned a lot about how to manage forests.

Pine  
cones



# THE DEPARTMENT OF FORESTRY, FISHERIES AND THE ENVIRONMENT



**What is  
the Department  
of Forestry,  
Fisheries and the  
Environment?**



## Branching Out

In the early 1990s, Forestry joined the Department of Water Affairs as a Chief Directorate (this means it was an important division). Because forests are so essential to our environment, economy and communities, this division has grown and now stands as its own Branch within the Department.

## Protecting Our Precious Resources

As guardians of South Africa's forests, we work hard to make sure these important resources are used carefully. We're dedicated to supporting activities that help our communities grow and thrive, ensuring everyone has an equal chance to succeed and live well.



## Guiding and Regulating

We're not just overseeing forestry, we also set the rules and create policies. Our goal is to create opportunities for economic and social growth through sustainable forestry practices, with a special focus on local communities.

## Empowering Entrepreneurs

Our Forestry Branch is here to help aspiring entrepreneurs. We provide essential information, uncover business opportunities, and offer guidance to ensure that new businesses can flourish without harming our forests.

**It's an important authority that makes sure our water and forests are used carefully and will benefit everyone.**



A grey hawk with a yellow eye and orange beak is perched on a dark tree branch. The hawk's feathers are a mix of grey and white with dark streaks. The background is a soft, out-of-focus green. Large, white, stylized text is overlaid on the image.

# FINDING THE RIGHT BALANCE



**Trees are so useful, but they need to be protected too.**

## **How we use and protect our forests**

Forests are very valuable, and we all enjoy them in different ways. But it's very important to use them responsibly to keep them safe for future generations. The National Forest Protection Act 1998 has put some rules in place to explain the ways in which we are allowed to use the forest, while protecting them from harm too.



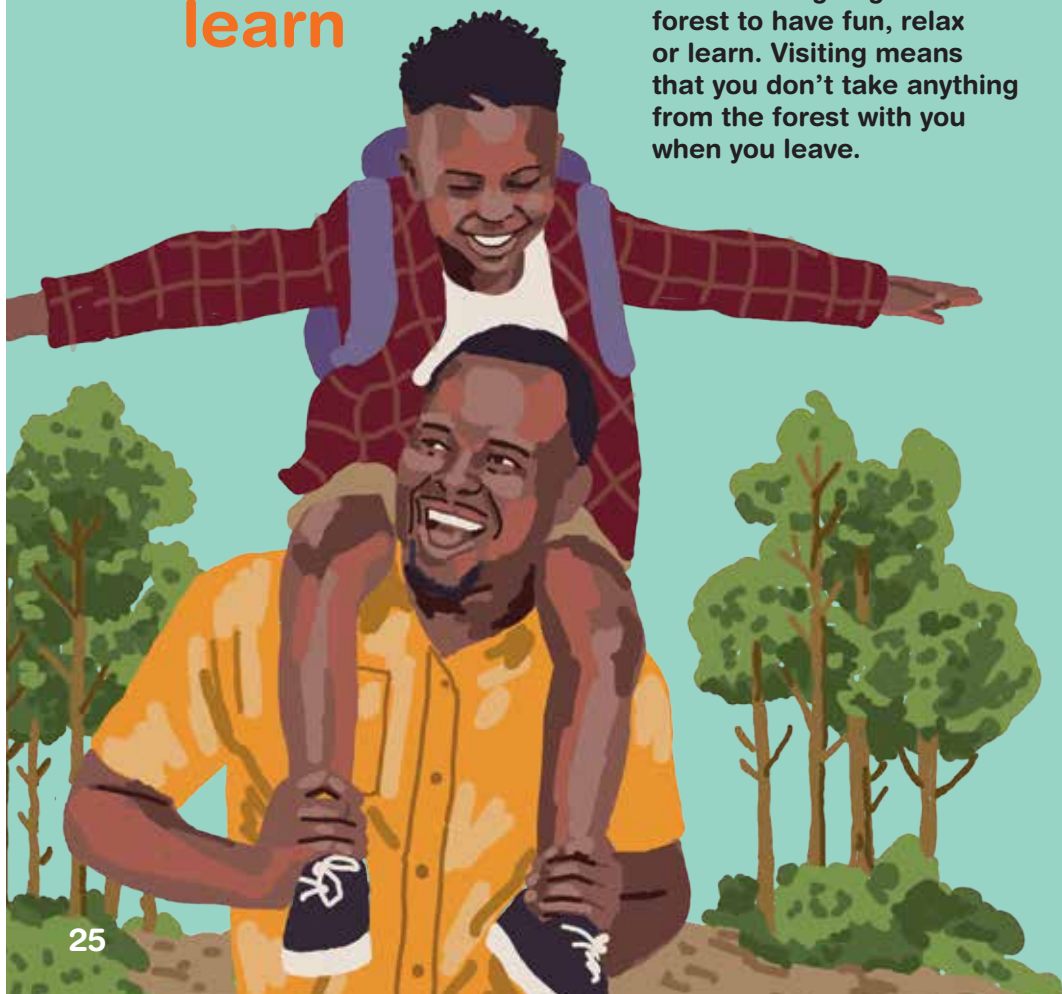
**Exactly! That's why our forests are kept safe using the Balancing Act Model.**

# How we can use our forests

Have fun,  
relax or  
learn

We can visit  
our forests

This means going into the forest to have fun, relax or learn. Visiting means that you don't take anything from the forest with you when you leave.



# We can use resources responsibly

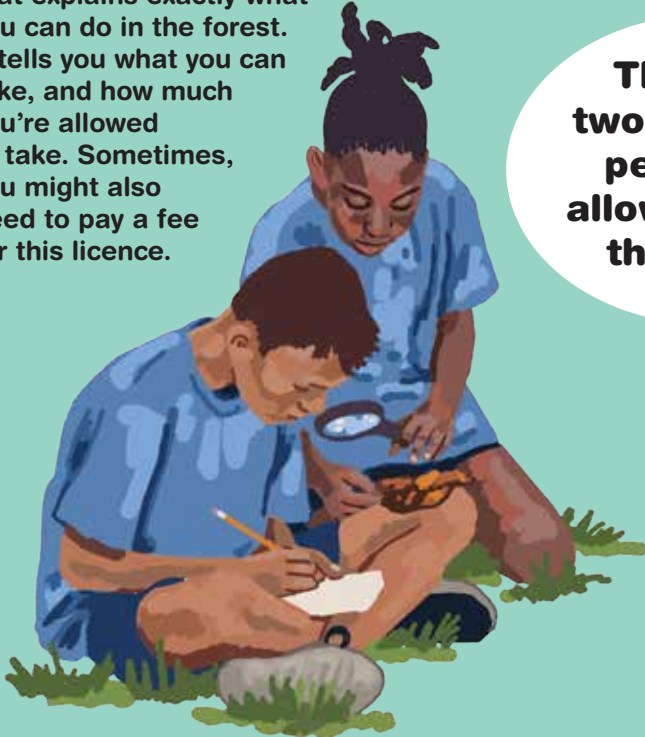
This use of the forest involves taking some of its resources, like wood or plants. But it's carefully regulated to make sure we don't take too much. People need a special exemption or licence to do this.



**Exemptions:** People who live near the State Forests can go into the forest without a special permit. They can take things like wood or plants that they need for their own use at home, such as for cooking or building. But they can't take things to sell, and they have to follow certain rules.

**Licences:** For most people, getting a licence is the usual way to use resources from the forest. A licence is a permission slip from a Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment official that explains exactly what you can do in the forest. It tells you what you can take, and how much you're allowed to take. Sometimes, you might also need to pay a fee for this licence.

**There are two ways that people are allowed to use the forest.**



# Follow the rules

If someone uses the forest without permission, it's against the law. The Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment helps make sure everyone sticks to the rules by:

- Working together with communities.
- Running awareness campaigns.
- Arresting someone if they really have to.

**There are many rules that make sure our forests are protected for everyone to enjoy.**



We look after natural forests and the special plants and animals that live in them by creating protected areas.



**Following Rules**



**Protecting Natural Forests and Species**



# HOW WE CAN PROTECT OUR FORESTS

We make sure that people only use forests in a sustainable way by giving them permits that control what and how much they can take.

Some areas are officially declared as State Forests, which helps protect them with stricter rules.



**Controlled  
Use**



**Declaring  
State Forests**

**I hope  
you've enjoyed  
learning all about  
trees with me  
Lindi!**



**It's been  
great! I can't wait  
to tell my friends  
everything I know.**





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