

Scotland's Tree Festival returns to Ayrshire & Arran

Some of Scotland's most beautiful and unusual trees will be celebrated once again this year as the Scottish Tree Festival returns for its second year.

Organised by national garden tourism group Discover Scottish Gardens and supported by VisitScotland, the Festival aims to inspire local people and tourists to take a trip outdoors and enjoy Scotland's spectacular array of diverse woodlands and gardens.

Over 70 nationwide events will be held from 28th September to 1st December with two venues in Ayrshire & Arran showcasing the region's rich and varied tree life.

The Festival returns after a highly successful first year with continued participation from the National Trust for Scotland (NTS), Historic Environment Scotland and Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh.

In Ayrshire & Arran, **Kelburn Castle and Estate** will be offering a self-led Heritage Tree Trail where visitors can discover the many weird and wonderful trees lurking in their unique woodland, gardens and glen, while **Brodick Castle, Garden & Country Park** will be holding Autumn Fest events from 13th to 21st October, which will involve numerous activities, including a scarecrow trail through the forest, an autumn-themed treasure hunt and ghost tours.

Ann Steele, Head of Heritage Gardening (Policy) at National Trust for Scotland, said: *"The Scottish Tree Festival is a great way to take a moment to reflect on and acknowledge the important role trees play in our everyday lives. The benefits of trees extend beyond their beauty; from social and communal to economic, health and environmental benefits. Scotland is lucky to have some of the most extraordinary species, rich in heritage and diversity. We are thrilled that our involvement in this year's festival has grown with an increased number of sites taking part and we look forward to welcoming visitors of all ages to our events and activities."*

Gordon Smith, VisitScotland Regional Director, said: *"I am thrilled to see the Scottish Tree Festival return to Ayrshire & Arran for its second year. This festival offers an opportunity for visitors to experience Scotland's rich autumn colours and enjoy some of the unique stories surrounding the trees.*

"Promoting events that share the tourism windfall in lesser known parts of Scotland and out with peak times of the year is key for VisitScotland. Events like this are a great way for visitors to discover new attractions and ensure the benefits of tourism are felt across the country throughout the year."

The Tree Festival has also teamed up with Scotrail to offer its customers the chance of winning tickets to an associate member of the festival.

For more information and event listings for this year's tree festival, please visit <http://discoverscottishgardens.org/events>