

10 YEARS PLAY FORESTS IN FLANDERS – A REVIEW

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Abstract

In 1998, the concept of play forests was introduced in the Flemish Forest Legislation. Where and how did this concept emerge? How has it been implemented? What are the results in the field?

Ten years of experience show the concept of play forests is a strong one, as well in its simplicity as in its applicability. During these years, attention for the children's play in forests has been increased. More than 2 % of the forest area has been designated as official "play forest". Youth organisations regularly visit the play forests, with great respect for forest and nature. Moreover, the concept has grown and passed the forest edge into other green areas, such as nature reserves, parks and school areas. There has been a general attention towards integrating "green" into the children's playing environment and mind.

The presentation will illustrate the concept of play forests and the evolution within the integration of children's play into forest and nature management and planning of green areas in Flanders. Pictures, figures and descriptions of projects will give an insight in this evolution.

Key Words

Play forests, children, forest and nature management, forest recreation