

## PRESS RELEASE

### **The UK's Hidden Rainforests: The Magical Ancient Woodland You've Probably Never Heard Of**

New research commissioned by Plantlife to mark World Rainforest Day (22 June 2015) reveals that while over half (58%) of people in the UK say they understand what a *temperate rainforest* is, a surprising number still associate them with faraway places like Brazil (45%) – unaware that Britain is home to its own ancient rainforests.

For years referred to as "Atlantic oakwoods" or "Celtic rainforests," the term *temperate rainforest* better captures their global rarity. Woodland with high levels of rainfall, mild climate and high levels of biodiversity, the climatic conditions required to form temperate rainforest occur over less than 1% of the planet, which makes it a very precious habitat.

"Britain's rainforests are hiding in plain sight – in places like the west coast of Scotland, Eryri (Snowdonia) in Wales, the Lake District and the fringes of Dartmoor and Exmoor," said Adam Thorogood, Rainforest Programme Manager at Plantlife. "These are ancient places with twisted branches, dappled light and boulders cloaked in mosses and lichens – survivors of Earth's earliest ecosystems, tracing back 400 million years."

Our rainforest is also one of the most biodiverse habitats on Earth, home to a vast array of wildlife, much of it scarce and threatened; the pearl-bordered fritillary butterfly and songbirds such as wood warbler, pied flycatcher and redstart.

Despite being some of Britain's oldest living landscapes, once covering up to 20% of the UK, temperate rainforests are now reduced to less than 1% due to centuries of clearance, air pollution, inappropriate grazing and invasive species.

The UK public wants the government to do more – with 88% of people saying it should make protecting temperate rainforests a priority.

"If Britain's rainforests are to survive, we need an urgent response from governments. Political commitments to tackle the twin crises of biodiversity and climate change are worth very little without real action on the ground. National rainforest funds, full legal protection and long-term support for rainforest managers are vital steps forward," said Jenny Hawley, Plantlife's Policy & Advocacy Manager.

Plantlife is working with farmers, landowners, governments, and communities to protect, restore and manage the UK's remaining temperate rainforests, ensuring they can thrive for generations to come.

Visit [What's On - Plantlife](#) to attend World Rainforest Day walks near you and online activities.

**#WorldRainforestDay #Biodiversity #TemperateRainforest #WildlifeConservation  
#SavetheRainforest #NatureLovers #Moss #Lichens**

**Notes to editors:**

**Images and video available for use with credit:**

[https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/uohqb7jrszw59jehvino2/AlhqF\\_6dGGwGbn1p21i8X8M?rlkey=dl1lxcjrybvz9nlv5p5eynm0j&st=5khnw8e8&dl=0](https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/uohqb7jrszw59jehvino2/AlhqF_6dGGwGbn1p21i8X8M?rlkey=dl1lxcjrybvz9nlv5p5eynm0j&st=5khnw8e8&dl=0)

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**About Plantlife:**

Plantlife is the global charity working to enhance, protect, restore and celebrate the wild plants and fungi that are essential to all life on earth. With two in five plant species at risk of extinction, biodiversity loss is now the fastest it's ever been and Plantlife's work has never been more vital. Plantlife champions and accelerates conservation action, working at the heart of a global network of individuals and organisations, to influence and inspire landowners and land managers, public and private bodies, governments and local communities. As time begins to run out, Plantlife's position as the global voice for wild plants and fungi will help to bring lasting and positive change to our natural world – for everyone's sake.