



Tree Friends

The little tree stood between two houses. It leaned slightly to one side, and its leaves looked dry and cracked. Its bark was peeling away, and its branches were too weak for people to climb. But no one seemed to mind. In fact, no one seemed to see the tree at all.

But two girls cared about this tree. Andrea lived in the house on one side of the tree. Sandra lived in the house on the other side. Sandra's family had just moved to the neighborhood. These girls were the same age, but they had never met.

One morning, Sandra walked toward the tree. She had flower seeds in one hand and a hose in the other. She planned to plant the seeds around the tree. Just then, she saw Andrea coming toward the tree, too. Andrea was pulling a small cart that held a rake and a big bag of soil. When they saw each other heading for the same spot, the two girls laughed aloud.

Sandra **announced**, "Let's make this our tree and take care of it together!"

Over the summer, they watered and fed the tree. It slowly grew stronger and taller. Its leaves turned a rich green color, and birds began to nest in its branches. Neighbors **remarked** on how nice the tree looked.

While they worked, the girls had lots of **conversations**. Sandra had moved here from another country. She spoke English well, but she still **pronounced** some of her words differently. Andrea didn't make fun of her. Instead, she enjoyed telling Sandra about the neighborhood. Andrea told her about the best places to ride bikes, and she **warned** her about the hornet's nest in the park.

By the end of the summer, the girls had become best friends. They had a **discussion** about how healthy the tree had become and how it had brought them together. "Let's name this tree the Friendship Tree," Sandra said.

Andrea agreed, saying, "That sounds perfect."

COMPREHENSION How do Sandra and Andrea take care of the tree? Which words help you understand different ways of speaking?



Helping Our Wild Neighbors

Nature is all around us. It doesn't matter if you live in a tiny town or a big city, all you need to do is look outside your door. Outside, you'll see many different kinds of plants and animals. You'll also see many kinds of animal **behavior**. Have you seen trees and shrubs or birds and bugs? Have you seen squirrels and deer or frogs and fish? All of these living things are our friendly neighbors from the **natural** world. They are all part of what we call **wildlife**.

Many people have helped create better homes, or **habitats**, for wildlife in their own backyards. You can do it, too! It's easy. First, you can add plants to your yard. You can plant flowers, trees, and other **vegetation**. These plants will provide food and shelter for the animals nearby. If you don't have a backyard, that's fine, too. You can use a window box instead. A window box is a special container that holds soil and plants. You can place your window box outside your window. Insects and birds will love it.

Some people also like to use bird feeders. Bird feeders are containers that hold seeds that birds like to eat. You can hang a bird feeder from a tree, a porch, or another good spot. First, find out what kinds of birds live in your area. Next, find out what kinds of seeds they like to eat. Then, fill your bird feeder with those kinds of seeds. Be sure that your bird feeder is always clean. That way, the birds that eat from it will always stay healthy.

Our wild neighbors live in all kinds of **climates**—from wet and cold climates to hot and dry climates. No matter the weather, we can help all living things survive by making sure their environments stay healthy. With just a little effort, we can all make a huge difference!

COMPREHENSION What new words did you learn about nature? What things can you do to help your wild neighbors?

