Youth STEMM Award / Darwin Tree of Life 2023 Sci Comm challenge

Are you a budding ecologist, scientist, or science communicator?
Why not enter our competition by creating your own A3 poster about your favourite species. It could a bird, or a big hairy spider, or perhaps you'll focus on the very small and tell everyone about a microscopic life form. How about your favourite plant species or an unusual fungus. Whatever the topic, your chosen species should be native to Britain and Ireland and something you want to tell people about!

For inspiration head over to the YSA DToL education website to begin your task by learning about the Darwin Tree of Life project which aims to sequence 70,000 species of eukaryotic organisms in Britain and Ireland. You can even watch a video to learn more about graphic design. Once you're ready, create your poster based on any aspect of your chosen species, to inform and inspire others, and submit your entry.

How to create and submit your poster

1. Choose a species native to Britain and Ireland that has already been sequenced by the Darwin Tree of Life project - https://www.darwintreeoflife.org/genomes/genome-notes/ or https://www.darwintreeoflife.org/blog/
2. Pick a target audience for your poster. Either your own peer group, or a Primary school class.
3. Do some research about that species - the Darwin Tree of Life pages will link you to some relevant research. You could also look for information in other sources like Wikipedia.
4. Plan your poster. Consider:
   - What information do you think might be engaging or interesting to your chosen audience?
   - What might be your communication objectives?
   - How can your poster create impact?
   - What are your key messages? (We'd suggest no more than three)
   - What kind of imagery would support your key messages?
     (Be sure to include details of where your images came from, such as the original photographer or website they're taken from)
   - Do you need any data? How will you present it in an engaging way?
   - Is there a call to action? (What do you hope your audience will do after reading your poster?)

5. Design your poster.
   - Try to keep it visual. How much text will your audience want to read?
   - Create the poster in A3 format, landscape or portrait.
   - You can create your poster in whatever software you'd like, but please submit a PDF or JPG of your work.

Your posters should be emailed to: comms@ysawards.co.uk by 10th February, 2023
Each entry should also be accompanied by a completed competition entry form. If the poster is too large to attach you may send an upload link, such as for wetransfer or onedrive.

Judging criteria

Posters will be judged by a panel of sci comm experts and prizes given for the best work. The judges will be looking for originality, creativity and scientific accuracy. They will want to see information presented in a way that is engaging to the audience to grab people's attention, get their interest, and perhaps evoke action, for example if you are highlighting an endangered species.

Prizes have been kindly sponsored by the Earlham Institute. One winner will receive a £50 waterstones e-voucher. Two runners up will each receive a £20 waterstones e-voucher. Please note prizes are per entry. Open to Young people aged 13 – 19 years. See the competition entry form for the full terms and conditions.

Competition winners will be notified by 10th March 2023.

Your posters could be featured on the Darwin Tree of Life website and published on Youth STEMM Award social media. We hope you'll also print them out and display them at school.

You can also log your time working on the challenge for your Youth STEMM Award!

Good luck!