

# Diamond Tree

*Created in May 2023 by Alison Rowley with help from students of Callowell Primary School in Stroud*



**Formation:** Stand in a circle, with an even number of ribbons. Ideally, the colours of ribbons would be arranged in a repeating pattern, e.g. Red Yellow Blue Green, Red Yellow Blue Green, etc.

**Difficulty:** one of the trickier ones, purely because there are lots of people moving at once (which is hard to keep an eye on) and the timing of their moves is important (you can't have one person rush ahead). It's a quick one though, requiring one burst of concentration from each group of dancers, rather than lots of turn-taking.

**What's the goal?** To create a 'cage' or 'tree' from a pattern of diamonds all around the maypole. Similar to the Spider's Web dance but with twice as many ribbons moving at once. I get half the dancers/ribbons to create the pattern, and the other half to untie it again. This dance happens very quickly once the dancers have learnt the moves, so I often dance it twice in a row (pretty unheard of in other maypole dances!).

**Step 1.** Split the group into two equal size teams of dancers holding alternate ribbons, e.g. Reds & Blues, and Yellows & Greens (if using my order of ribbons above), or just Odd and Even numbers.

**Step 2.** Decide which team is going to move first, to create the pattern. I'll call these dancers the Tree Growers (although I'd normally just say their ribbon colours). Everyone else, stand still.

**Step 3:** The Tree Growers need to identify who is their First Partner (the person on their right) and who is their Second Partner (the person on their left). Check that everyone knows this before you start!

**Step 4:** The dance begins! The Tree Growers dance once around their First Partner, by first lifting their ribbon over their First Partner's head and walking around behind them, then ducking underneath their First Partner's ribbon to return to their original place in the circle. Everyone should be back where they started, but there should now be a twist between the two ribbons. Don't move on until every Tree Grower has finished this move!

**Step 5:** The Tree Growers repeat Step 4 around their Second Partner, once again lifting their ribbon over their Second Partner's head first, then returning by ducking underneath their Second Partner's ribbon. Don't move on until every Tree Grower has finished this move!

*Note: Step 4 will be an anticlockwise circle, while Step 5 is a clockwise circle. The two moves together mean that the Tree Grower is moving in a figure of 8 pattern – however, it's important that they don't rush into Step 5 until their whole team is ready to proceed. Also, you might need all dancers to take a small step closer to the maypole as you go along, because the Tree Growers will start to run out of ribbon.*

**Step 6:** Repeat Steps 4 and 5 approximately twice more. You'll notice this is sufficient to form an amazing pattern very quickly! Take a moment to enjoy the result before you unwind.

**To Unwind:**

**Step 7:** Tree Growers keep still now! The dancers who haven't yet moved are the Tree Destroyers. They need to identify their First Partner (on their right) and their Second Partner (on their left).

**Step 8:** Same as Step 4! But this move nows removes the ribbon twist, instead of creating one.

**Step 9:** Same as Step 5! Again, a twist is removed.

**Step 10:** Repeat Steps 8 and 9 as many times as you need to until the pattern has disappeared.

You could then try the dance again and admire how quickly the pattern appears and disappears, or even swap the groups over so the original Tree Destroyers now get to be the Tree Growers.

**Can I do this dance without a repeating pattern of coloured ribbons?** Yes! As long as there is an even number of ribbons, you can also use other role names like 1 and 2, or odd and even, or apples and bananas. Just make sure everyone knows which role they are taking before the dance starts, and adjust your instructions accordingly.

**What if I get a tangle?** As with all maypole dances, look at the twist closest to the bottom end of the ribbon. Think: which ribbon is on top? To untangle it, that top ribbon must move over the other one – just like the beginning of Steps 4 and 5. The good news is that untangling this dance shouldn't take long, because (theoretically!) no one has moved very far around the circle.