

# INFTA

International Nature and Forest Therapy Alliance



INFTA Accredited Training Provider

## Special end-of-the-year promotion: become a **Forest Therapy Guide** now!

If you've been thinking about becoming an **INFTA-Certified Forest Therapy Guide**, now is the time to realize your dreams: INFTA offers a special end-of-the-year promotion to become qualified in the six months, online-based, mentored and supervised Forest Therapy Guide training for only US\$ 2,999.-. **Save up to \$ 1,000!** The promotion ends 31 December 2025!

Sign up now to our new training cohort which resumes on 1 February 2026. Enjoy live mentoring sessions and the user-friendly, innovative INFTA Learning Management System (LMS). Reap the full benefits of the world-class training based on the International Core Curriculum of Forest Therapy (ICCFT) and qualify within six months. Becoming an INFTA-Certified Forest Therapy Guide has never been easier and more affordable.

Sign up now: [Forest Therapy Guide Training](#)



## Can a nature walk change your brain? Investigating hippocampal brain plasticity after one hour in a forest

There's exciting new science showing that spending time in nature doesn't just feel good – it can produce measurable changes in your brain.

[A recent study](#) looked at what happens to people's brains after just one hour walking in a forest compared with a busy urban street. Researchers used high-resolution brain imaging before and after the walks to explore how different environments affect the hippocampus – a part of the brain involved in stress regulation, memory, and rumination. Here's what they found:

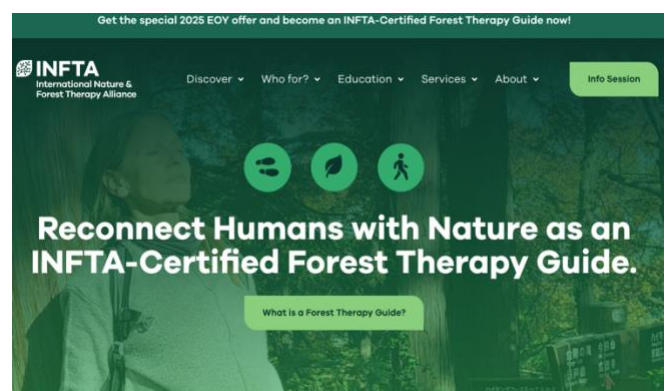
Forest walks altered brain structure – participants who walked in the forest showed increases in the volume of a key hippocampal region, which is linked to inhibiting stress responses.

Nature lowered rumination — these structural changes were associated with reductions in repetitive, stressful thinking after the nature walk. Urban walks didn't show the same effect — no comparable changes were observed in people who walked through the city.

Whether it's a stroll in a local park, a wander among trees, or an intentional forest therapy walk, time in nature can be a simple way to support your mental wellbeing. Every step outside is a chance to reset your mind and give your brain the space it needs to flourish. Today – put on your walking shoes, step outside, and let nature do the rest.

## INFTA leads the way in Forest Therapy

INFTA's President, Susan Joachim, who was just re-elected unanimously in her role during the recent Annual General Meeting by INFTA members, proudly announced the launch of INFTA's new and completely redesigned website on 23 December 2025. The new design follows the latest guidelines and software developments to offer individual, organisational and government clients a smart, customized and rewarding pathway to learn about INFTA and its many services as the global peak body in the area of Forest Therapy.



## Forest Therapy research and news from around the world

### New Study Finds Human Connection to Nature Has Declined by 60%

A recent scientific study by [Richardson \(2025\)](#) reveals that our connection to nature has dropped significantly – by around 60% over the past 220 years. As nature-related words disappear from our vocabulary, and as daily life moves indoors and onto screens, many people now spend less time outdoors and feel less connected as a result.

Yet nature remains one of the most accessible and powerful ways to restore wellbeing. A slow walk among trees, the sound of birds, sunlight through leaves, or even a mindful moment outdoors can help us feel calmer, clearer, and more grounded. 🌿

This holiday season, give yourself the gift of reconnection. Step outside. Slow down. Let nature meet you where you are.

And if you feel called to help others rediscover this connection – to guide communities toward better health, presence, and balance – consider becoming an INFTA-Certified Forest Therapy Guide.

[Learn more at this link!](#)

### Forest Therapy boosts mental and physical health of students

Awarded with a grant from the Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions in Victoria/Australia, INFTA successfully conducted another important research project. “*Effective Stress Reduction in Nature*” was intended to help international students across Victoria to regain their mental and physical health and fitness.

International students suffer from special stressors – over and above what domestic students experience when aspiring to complete a tertiary academic or vocational degree. Being away from their country, their family, often challenged to speak English – which is not their mother tongue – and finding suitable accommodation plus raising the fees for their studies abroad can be highly stressful leading to the development of chronic stress.

INFTA offered free Forest Therapy sessions to international students which helped to improve their mental and physical health markedly. More so: **over 80% of all international students who joined a Forest Therapy session were very satisfied** and would like to do it again ... and again ... and again!

### ‘I now look forward to guiding’

Maliga Naidoo, South Africa



*“INFTA’s extensive learning resources, well-structured online learning management system, and continuous, constructive guidance contributed to a highly effective and enriching training experience. I would especially like to acknowledge Susan Joachim, whose mentorship and thoughtful feedback after each assignment significantly supported my progress throughout the course. I now look forward to guiding individuals into forest environments, where they can experience the intense therapeutic benefits that Forest Therapy offers.” – Maliga is the world’s first INFTA-Certified Forest Therapy Tourist Guide in the Global South 😊*

### ‘Thank you for the positive energy’

Andreas Schmiedel, Germany



*“The practicum was a wonderful experience for me. Sometimes challenging and tiring, too. But now I’m very happy to have overcome all the hurdles. My sit spot in nature was a completely new experience, one I will continue to practice. I also really enjoyed drawing plants, insects, birds, and mammals. And I’m grateful that INFTA allowed me to adapt its guiding sequence for the target group of children. The forest days with the children were a great success and an unforgettable experience for the kids. Perhaps my experiences could be the start of new research and “INFTA Forest Therapy Guides for Children” will be trained. 😊*”



© 2025 International Nature and Forest Therapy Alliance (INFTA)

[infta.net](https://infta.net)

