

For immediate release

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Horniman reveals design for south London micro-forest

The Horniman has today (Monday 10 January) shared detailed plans for its new micro-forest, as planting begins on the site alongside the A205 South Circular road.

A 300m² area is being redeveloped to provide a 'green screen', protecting the Horniman's Gardens from noise and air pollution, and creating additional wildlife habitats, following a successful fundraising appeal in 2021.

The eastern section of the area will become a woodland, featuring coppiced hazel underplanted with meadow grassland including a mixture of wildflowers and native plants such as snowdrops, daffodils and bluebells, wood anemones and snakes head fritillaries.

The western section – closest to a busy and congested junction of the South Circular (London Road) – will be planted using the Miyawaki method, to create a dense and fast-growing micro-forest.

The Miyawaki method, created by Japanese botanist and plant ecologist Akira Miyawaki, uses natural forest regeneration processes and close planting, prompting trees to grow faster as they compete for the sun. The method speeds up the creation of a diverse, healthy forest which can capture more carbon far earlier than traditional reforestation techniques.

In both sections, the existing shrub border adjacent to the South Circular will be deepened, and existing trees and shrubs will be retained wherever possible. The plans have been finalised by Head of Horticulture Errol Fernandes, and the Horniman's Gardens team has been preparing the ground ready for this month's planting to begin.

More

Errol Fernandes, Head of Horticulture at the Horniman Museum and Gardens, says: 'We're excited to be using the Miyawaki method to plant our micro-forest, and to be creating this important new habitat and environmental buffer. We're incredibly thankful to everyone who supported our appeal and played a vital part in creating something that will benefit our local environment for decades to come.'

The London Road Tree Planting Appeal, fronted by garden designer, TV presenter and Horniman Ambassador Joe Swift, ran from February 2021 and raised almost £25,000 – more than doubling its original target.

Planting will continue through the winter and into early spring, with the newly planted trees taking some years to mature.

Ends

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Pictured: Overview illustration of the design, credit Horniman Museum and Gardens

Notes to Editors:

- **The Horniman Museum and Gardens** opened in 1901 as a gift to the people in perpetuity from tea trader and philanthropist Frederick John Horniman, to 'bring the world to Forest Hill'. Today the Horniman has a collection of 350,000 objects, specimens and artefacts from around the world. Its galleries include natural history, music and an acclaimed aquarium. A new World Gallery of anthropology opened in June 2018 and a new arts space, The Studio, opened in October 2018. Indoor exhibits link to the award-winning display gardens – from medicinal and dye gardens to an interactive sound garden, Butterfly House and an animal walk – set among 16 acres of beautiful, green space offering spectacular views across London. horniman.ac.uk
- **Coronavirus impact: Every month the Horniman was closed cost around £150,000 in lost income** from ticket sales, memberships, the shop and café. In recent years, the Horniman has increasingly relied on this vital income to help care for the Gardens, animals and Aquarium residents, to run events and to look after the collections. The support of returning visitors, our supporters and their generous donations are more needed than ever. horniman.ac.uk/support-us/
- The **Horniman Museum and Gardens** is core-funded by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and since 1990 has been governed by an independent charitable trust, registered charity no. 802725. The Horniman Museum and Gardens also receives funding from Arts Council England as one of its National Portfolio Organisations.
- On 29 July 2019 the **Horniman Museum and Gardens declared an ecological and climate emergency**, pledging to place carbon reduction and environmental issues at the heart of its work. The declaration – and the subsequent **Climate and Ecological Manifesto**, published in January 2020 – is a consolidation of existing work and a commitment to renewed ambitions to reduce the Horniman's environmental and pollution footprint, increase biodiversity, and inspire others to do so. Find out more about the Horniman's manifesto commitments and progress so far at horniman.ac.uk/climate.