

TU Dublin Staff and Students Collaborate with the Community to Promote Biodiversity

The [TU Dublin Biodiversity Plan](#) aims to promote various initiatives on our campuses and in our local areas to reduce human impact on our planet. As part of this overall approach, we planted an urban forest on the Tallaght campus. The project supports TU Dublin's [Sustainability Objectives](#) and the [Connecting with Nature - Draft Biodiversity Action Plan for South Dublin County](#).

This was the first of several projects designed to enhance our campus and promote biodiversity, while also offsetting the CO₂ emissions we produce. The forest on the Tallaght campus was planted in collaboration with local community organisations and volunteers, with whom we have and will continue to engage on similar environmental projects in our region. It was designed to align with a module on [Active Citizenship](#), developed as part of a HEA-funded project, [Transform Edu](#).

Planting an Urban Forest on the Tallaght Campus

In September 2021 we began the design of an Urban Forest at Tallaght Campus, supported by John Kiberd, [Stepping Stone Forests](#). Stepping Stone Forests are small densely planted forests of native Irish trees. The method of planting these small forests is inspired by the world-renowned botanist Professor Akira Miyawaki. The soil preparation and dense planting ensures that these forests grow and develop extremely quickly.

The Soil Preparation Phase

In December 2021, we began the *Soil Preparation Phase*, cutting the grass and putting down cardboard and mulch, supported by staff and students and community groups. John Kiberd and Rachel Freeman, Lecturer in Horticulture at TU Dublin, managed operations. A video link to a short animation is available at <https://youtu.be/sskYK8UUy2U>



Preparing the Site: Soil Preparation Phase
Dr. Phil Mulvaney, Gerry Stockill and Rachel Freeman (TU Dublin)



The Tree Planting Phase

In March, 2022, we embarked on the *Tree Planting Phase*, supported by individuals and community groups, including Stepping Stone Forests, Tallaght Community Council, and Dodder Action. We planted hundreds of native trees (blackthorn, hawthorn, black alder, hazel, spindleberry, silverbirch). More than 30 people helped on the day.



TU Dublin Students and Staff: Paul Campbell (Estates), Orla Fleming (Campus Nurse), Phil Mulvaney (Strategic Projects), First Year Students Dylan Byrne, Evan Collins & Danny Preston, and Michelle Cresswell (Campus Nurse)

The Schools Forest Programme

In March 2022, we also collaborated with the Tallaght Community Council in planting forests in local schools, including Killinarden Community School (pictured below). We had some bare root trees left over and were happy to donate them to Killinarden Community School. Between the Tallaght campus and Killinarden, we planted 1,000 trees. Gerry Stockill, Senior

Lecturer in Electronic Engineering at TU Dublin (pictured far right), as Secretary of Tallaght Community Council, supported this and many other green initiatives.



TU Dublin students and staff help to plant a forest at Killinarden Community School, with Members of Tallaght Community Council, 23rd March 2022



Green Flag Status

TU Dublin is seeking green flag status with An Taisce. This project will help us to achieve green flag status and reflects our commitment to [Promoting Sustainability on Campus](#). The project aligns with our ambition to be a beacon for sustainability, in partnership with communities and environmental organisations, including the Environmental Education Unit of An Taisce, [LeafIreland](#), which seeks to educate and promote successful environmental programmes.

The Next Phase

On the Tallaght campus, we plan to rewild some areas of the campus. Rewilding involves restoring an area of land to its natural uncultivated state with the reintroduction of species that have been driven out or exterminated. Public and private institutions, as well as businesses as well as community groups can do much to 'rewild' smaller areas of land and provide valuable habitats for flora and fauna. Our next step is to plant some more evergreen trees at the urban forest site on campus and a wildflower meadow on a stretch of land at the Belgard Road entrance. With our new building projects near completion, we plan to further enhance the landscape to provide an environmentally friendly and aesthetically pleasing environment for all to enjoy!