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TREE NURSERY

The area now occupied by the Tree Nursery has had a number of uses over the years. During WW1 and 2, it provided a base for soldiers. After WW2, rubble from bombed areas of the City was deposited on Hackney Marshes, which means that a variety of building materials are soon encountered when planting trees!

In the 1980s, the Marshes were planted with trees from the GLC (Greater London Council) Tree Nursery. In 1986 the Marshes came into the care of the London Borough of Hackney (LBH). Around the LBH Depot, the trees included rows of Lawson cypress, Norway maple, sycamore, ash, catalpa (Indian bean tree), Turkey oak, whitebeam, crab apple, manna ash, bird cherry, blue cedar and sweet chestnut. The Lawson cypresses, especially, provide an important habitat for insects and birds. Species frequently seen feeding and/or nesting include thrush, robin, dunnock, wren, green woodpecker, pied wagtail, blackbird, blue tit, great tit, long-tailed tit, goldfinch and goldcrest. Foxes also live around the site (*opposite*).



1 Cedars, foreground, with a collection of Lawson cypress. 2 Western red cedar, planted 1990s, with bird cherry (left), catalpa (right, & 5, below), & tall hedge of Lawson cypress. 3 Japanese flowering cherry, Homerton Road. 4 Cones of large cone pine. Some of these trees are to be lost as this part of Hackney Marshes is taken for Olympics development land.



THE TREE NURSERY & EDIBLE GARDEN

A BASE FOR COMMUNITY AND EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES ON HACKNEY MARSHES



Members of Hackney Marsh User Group (HMUG) potting up native black poplars. Cuttings taken in Wick Woodland are grown on in the Tree Nursery until large enough to be planted in parks.

TREE NURSERY SESSIONS

HMUG has regular sessions at the Tree Nursery & Edible Garden. More information can be found on the website below.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Buses 236, 276, 308 & W15 to Homerton Rd. 242 to Millfields Rd. and Cowbridge. 55, 56, 48 to Lea Bridge Rd.

Trains BR stations: Hackney Wick; Homerton.

This leaflet was prepared by Anne Woollett, Mike Trier and Annie Chipchase.

All photos © Anne Woollett.

For copies of the leaflet contact 020 8985 1256, or see

www.hackneyenvironment.org.uk

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For a time there was a pitch and putt on what is now the Tree Nursery. In the 1990s, park staff started to use the area to store trees until they could be planted out in Hackney Parks.



Since 2000, the Tree Nursery has become the base for Hackney Marsh User Group (HMUG) activities on the Marshes and in Wick Woodland. Groundwork East London erected polytunnels to provide classroom, meeting and workspace facilities, and installed lock-ups to house equipment.

Many trees have been planted by HMUG, including larch, birch, cherry and apple. Around the periphery, a hedge and shelter belt of shrubs has been planted. This comprises hawthorn, field maple, gorse, rowan and willow. HMUG has also grown cuttings of the native black poplars in Wick Woodland and raised other species, such as golden rain tree, from seed. Many of the oaks planted on the Marshes since 2000 were grown in the Tree Nursery from acorns collected in Epping Forest by local schoolchildren.



HMUG runs a fortnightly work session at the Tree Nursery when volunteers carry out a variety of tasks to nurture and maintain the species planted and create new habitats. The aim of the management of the Tree Nursery is to enhance the wildlife value and thus the



6 One of the resident foxes. 7 Aromatic herb bed, polytunnels and Lawson cypress hedge. 8 HMUG Tree Nursery session. 9 Holding-bed for trees ready to be planted out in Hackney.

biodiversity of Hackney Marshes. Species planted are selected to provide a year-round food resource as well as roosting and nesting sites for birds, small mammals and insects.

Water is very important for wildlife, and wetland habitats support different communities of species.



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In 2006, two ponds and a bog garden were created to further diversify the habitats.

The Tree Nursery is used as an educational base and resource for children from local schools – activities

include tree planting and aftercare, sculpture using natural materials, plant identification and exploring Wick Woodland.

EDIBLE GARDEN

In 2006, HMUG volunteers started to create an edible forest garden. Edible forest gardens comprise trees, shrubs, and perennial and annual species, that provide food for people and wildlife. They are designed using permaculture principles. These take into account the existing conditions, such as fertility, drainage, climate

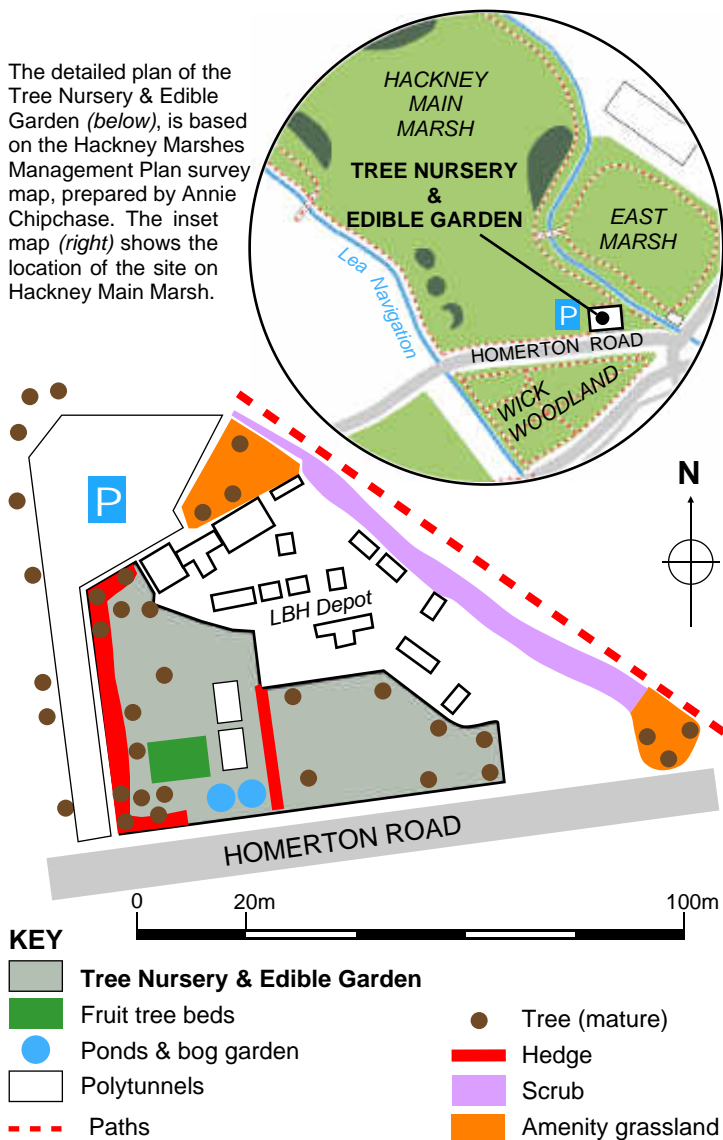


10 Aromatic plants: herbs growing in re-used bins and boxes. 11 Established pond, fenced with coppiced willow by youngsters from Youth Offending Team. 12-14 Children drawing trees in the polytunnel; planting trees in the Nursery; and creating sculptures from natural materials.



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The detailed plan of the Tree Nursery & Edible Garden (below), is based on the Hackney Marshes Management Plan survey map, prepared by Annie Chipchase. The inset map (right) shows the location of the site on Hackney Main Marsh.



KEY

Tree Nursery & Edible Garden	Tree (mature)
Fruit tree beds	Hedge
Ponds & bog garden	Scrub
Polytunnels	Amenity grassland
Paths	

FOREST GARDENS

Designed to be self-renewing, self-fertilising and self-maintaining to provide high yields of diverse products. Achieved through:

1. Using perennials and self-sowing annuals;
2. Mulching and leaving the soil undisturbed;
3. Building soil fertility through planting nitrogen-fixers and species that accumulate minerals and act as mulches;
4. Reducing or eliminating pest-control by providing food and shelter for insectivorous birds and predatory and parasitic invertebrates.



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15 Fruit on crab apples.



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16 HMUG volunteers planting fruit bushes.



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17 Raspberry canes mulched by local children.

etc. The selection of species is based on their characteristics and requirements, and their ability to grow together and fulfill a number of functions, such as providing shade, support, minerals and nutrients.

Forest gardening aims to mimic the way in which species grow in forests, i.e. utilising all the vertical layers (canopy, understorey, groundcover, soil and root systems). After the initial design and planting, the work of the volunteers should be limited to mulching, some pruning, occasional weeding, minimal pest- and disease-management, and harvesting.

The ponds and bog garden are settling in, and more plants, especially edible species, such as water lily and water mint will be added in 2007.

Supporters The Tree Nursery & Edible Garden are supported by Parks; HMUG, Tree Musketeers and corporate volunteers; children from local schools; and funding from Parklife, NFR and Green Gateway.

Within the edible garden the fruit and nut trees – apple, pear, cherry, plum, walnut, hazel and crab apple – will form part of the canopy layer. Below them will be shrubs and perennial herbs tolerant of some shade, with annuals and sun-loving shrubs within open glades or at the edges. Blackcurrants, raspberries, and globe and Jerusalem artichokes have already been planted, and these are to be joined by a host of other species including rhubarb, horse radish, fig, mulberry, olive, almond and chard.