Dunchurch Allotment Association



By Paul Sanders

"That's the last blackthorn in!" shouts Lisa, as the work party concludes the planting of two hundred saplings along the allotment roadside. The task is to continue the project of creating a southern boundary hedge around the allotment site. It was in 2012 when the first of many tree planting events took place. The saplings have been donated by the Woodland Trust who run a scheme to give free trees to schools and community groups. The saplings will eventually form a mixed hedge consisting of hawthorn, blackthorn, rowan, birch, hazel, oak, crab apple, elder and dog rose. Apart from creating a designated boundary the hedge will enhance the biodiversity of the allotment site.

Tree planting schemes are being promoted more than ever in recent years to ameliorate the effects of climate change by removing carbon dioxide from the air. The 'Big Climate Fightback' project run by the Woodland Trust aims to get more than 50 million trees in the ground in the UK and BBC's Countryfile 'Plant Britain' project has a goal of establishing 750 thousand trees. Even Her Majesty is in on the act with 'The Queen's Green Canopy' where people are invited to plant trees in 2022 to mark her Platinum Jubilee.

While the typical mature tree will absorb around twenty kilos of carbon dioxide per year the developing hedges at Dunchurch allotments are unlikely to match this number. What they will do however is provide a habitat for a wealth of wildlife from shade-loving plants and delicate fungi, to nesting birds, elusive mammals and numerous invertebrates. In future years the work party will be back to lay the hedge and Lisa this time will be shouting "That the last pleacher down; time for a cup of tea!"

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Planting the first saplings for the southern boundary hedge in April last year (far left), and adding more in January 2022 (left)