

eden project

PRESS RELEASE

The Eden Project regenerates ancient Cornish hedges dating back to 1600s

Five hundred trees have been planted this winter at the Eden Project to repair gaps in ancient Cornish hedges dating back as far as the 17th century.



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The hedges flank the bridleways, public footpaths and field systems of Eden's Outer Estate, a vast area of land enveloping the main visitor site.

Eden's Living Landscapes Estate team have planted native saplings of field maple, blackthorn, alder and birch into the existing hedges.

The aim is to improve essential wildlife corridors, enhancing habitat connectivity across the Eden site and linking up with neighbouring landscapes.

Hedgerows across the UK have decreased by around half since the Second World War due to increased demands on agriculture^[1].

Cornwall alone has more than 30,000 miles of Cornish hedge, some of which is said to date back 3,800 years to the early Bronze Age^[2].

Supporting more than 600 species of flowering plant and 10,000 species of invertebrates, including critical pollinators, Cornish hedges are thought to be some of the oldest structures on Earth that are still used for their original function of marking field boundaries.

As well as being crucial habitats for an abundance of flora and fauna, Cornish hedges can reduce windspeed by up to 20%, can provide leeward shelter, prevent soil erosion and reduce flash flooding^[3].

Eden's Living Landscapes Estate Manager, Phil Young, said: "Eden's Outer Estate spans a vast 72 hectares – six times the size of the main Eden site – and is home to around 10km of hedge.

"Many visitors may not be aware of the vast network of bridleways and public footpaths that weave across the Outer Estate and are lined with some of our oldest trees and shrubs.

"Within this space, we're able to put into practice some of the brilliant regenerative stories told across the gardens of the main Eden site."

Phil added: "Despite their environmental and ecological importance, Cornish hedges are not considered hedgerows and are therefore not protected under the Hedgerow Regulations (1997). As a result, preserving and repairing Cornish hedges is challenging and costly, but absolutely essential for maintaining thriving biodiversity."

The planting at Eden is part of a wider regeneration project to increase the diversity and age of plant life across the site; from creating and maintaining diverse copses and orchards to protecting ancient peat boglands and temperate rainforest habitats.

ENDS

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