

SYCAMORE AND IVY DOMINATING A WOODED AREA

Throughout the Cemetery Park's history from its opening to burials in 1841 through to its closure as a burial site in 1966 the park has been growing a thick stand of Sycamore trees. This in turn was then covered in Ivy growth deriving from Victorian planting of a very vigorous form of common Ivy.

BELOW: Open woods with a backdrop of ivy covered trees.



Dense sycamore woodland covered in Ivy is dark, unattractive and uninviting; this kind of environment in the park gives people a negative perception, and is of limited value for wildlife because the tall trees and dense Ivy take up so much space and light, allowing very few other plant species to survive.

The Cemetery Park was given the designation of a 'Site of Metropolitan Importance for Nature Conservation' in 1995, and was designated a Local Nature Reserve in 2001. It has an importance as woodland to Tower Hamlets and London. With these two protective and statutory designations we have an obligation to manage the Cemetery Park and its woodland in a sustainable, sympathetic and positive way that makes it a great site for both wildlife and people.

***Tower Hamlets Cemetery Park,
Southern Grove, E3.***

Nearest tube station – Mile End.

For more Information visit:

www.towerhamletscemetery.org

Or email: info@towerhamletscemetery.org



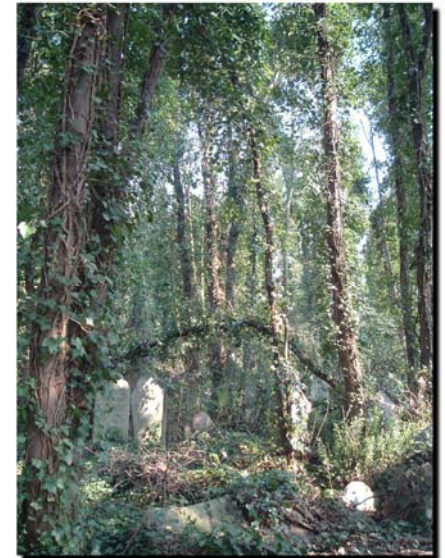
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ABOVE: Autumn in the park

BELOW: Ivy covered sycamore trees



REMOVING IVY AND THINNING SYCAMORES

To create and nurture vibrant and healthy woodland we have to start by opening the woodland to allow more sunlight to reach the woodland floor.

We achieve this by:

- Removing Ivy from the ground and trees
- Thinning the trees
- Selective removal of Cow Parsley, Nettles and Bramble.

Many volunteers join us during autumn/winter months to help us improve the woodland in the park.

Think of complex, wildlife rich woodland in the form of 'layers'. At each level from the ground through to the canopy we look to encourage a varied age stand of tree and shrub growth. This offers a wide range of light conditions which in turn allows a wider diversity of plants to grow, which maximises the woodland's potential for wildlife.

We aim to create a open canopy of mature trees with younger trees beneath growing towards the canopy, and with shrubs and climbers below them. On the woodland floor are shade tolerant wildflowers, grasses and spring bulbs. Below that, mosses and leaf litter.

Once the woodland has been opened up to improve the light conditions we can implement an extensive planting and seeding programme.

BELOW: Clearing ivy



RIGHT: Volunteers after a hard day clearing Ivy.



We begin by planting young trees, shrubs and climber species such as Hazel, Oak, Buckthorn, Wild Privet, Spindle, Yew, Hawthorn, Wild Rose and Honeysuckle.

This is then complemented with bulb planting such species as Wild Daffodils, Snowdrops, Arum Lilies and Wood Anemones followed by seeding of woodland grasses and woodland wildflowers like Red Campion, Wood Avens, Honesty, and Garlic Mustard. The park's Bluebells are hybrids between English and Spanish bluebells. They thrive so well we can leave them to do their own thing.

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LEFT: Recently cleared woods.



RIGHT: Tree Planting.



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A DIVERSE, OPEN, AND WILDLIFE RICH WOODLAND

Open woodland has a mosaic of varying light conditions that will allow a wider variety of plants and animals to co-exist.

Once we have opened up, planted and sown a section of woodland we can then begin to monitor the woodland for wildlife and then bring the area into our sustainable woodland management practices of coppicing and thinning to maintain varied ages of trees and varied light conditions, and control of plants so vigorous they suppress diversity.

In open woodland you can expect to see more birds, a greater abundance and wider variety of invertebrates, such as bees and butterflies, and enjoy a range of woodland wildflowers among them Primrose, Sweet and Dog Violet, Lesser Celandine and Herb Robert.



ABOVE: Bluebells

An improved woodland understory improves conditions for insect feeding animals such as bats. Of the 17 species of UK bat some are woodland specialists like the Noctule and Brown Long Eared. They will actively feed along wood edges and in the canopy catching insects on the wing and gleaning insects off leaves, bark and branches. Other mammals present in the Park, including Hedgehogs, Bank Voles, Wood Mice and Foxes benefit



ABOVE: Sweet Violet

greatly from the increased supply of invertebrates and wild fruits such as Cherry, Blackthorn, Hawthorn and Hazel. The Hazels, and the kernels inside the stones of the other fruits are staple foods for the Mice and Voles.

BELOW: Primrose



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BELOW: Honesty in the woods

