



AN ARBORETUM
for
EAST ANGLIA

Introduction

East Anglia is known for its natural beauty. It has some of the most stunning landscapes – estuaries, marshes, heathland, woods and forests. It has National Parks, National Landscapes and areas of Special Scientific Interest.

Though there are places which go by the name ‘arboretum’, these tend to be more recreational places than ones geared towards study and research. East Anglia has no truly, authentic, world-leading arboretum.

There is nowhere in East Anglia where people with a passion for trees can see them in the most appropriate setting. There isn’t a location where dozens of trees from the same species – similar but often with subtle differences and variations – are growing next to each other, or where trees of exceptional rarity and beauty

can be nurtured and documented for scientific and educational purposes. There isn’t a place where the rich history and varied folklore of trees can be fully explained, understood and properly recorded for posterity. There isn’t anywhere in the region where the importance of trees to our culture can be fully appreciated and articulated.

This prospectus introduces an ambitious and exciting new project that will fill this void and create a magnificent new and totally unique Arboretum for East Anglia.



Our Vision

An Arboretum is special. It is more than just a collection of trees. It is in many ways a living museum. It is where a fabulous number of trees are cultivated for scientific and educational purposes.

The scale of the Arboretum we are planning for East Anglia will be considerable, both in terms of its size and the range of species grown. We hope that it will be unparalleled in the region and potentially in the whole of the United Kingdom. There will be everything from Acer to Zelkova, with multiple variations within each species.

We will explain how each of these species grows and develops. We will highlight their special characteristics and what makes them unique. We will show how they are pollinated, how they spread their seeds and how they flourish. We will show how trees communicate with each other and examine their astonishing symbiotic relationship with insects, birds and even fungi.

Alongside this we will analyse the challenges trees overcome as well as those which threaten their future. The potential impact of climate change will be an important theme.

The extent and nature of woodlands and forests in East Anglia from the past will be documented alongside an explanation of how the activities of humankind have created the landscape of today where just the occasional pocket of ancient woodland remains.

We will explain how plant hunters from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries brought exotic species to the United Kingdom and how so many of these are commonplace today.



We will demonstrate how some species, whose future has been threatened by disease, are able to build resistance. Our plan is to work with the scientific community and develop strategies to improve our knowledge of tree diseases and devise ways of preserving treasured species.

We are keen to preserve the fascinating folklore of trees, especially the stories relating to local trees and woods, before – with the passing of generations – they are lost forever. There is a richness to many East Anglian legends about trees. Tales and myths have been passed down through generations, but rarely properly documented. The Arboretum will provide a facility to capture, catalogue and record all of this.

The Arboretum will also have a strong educational side. Aboriculture and horticulture students can come to learn. Pupils can visit on school trips. Children with special educational needs can come simply to be outside in a safe place where they can enjoy nature and being in woodland.

We hope to run workshops for those of all ages and experience on a variety of subjects related to trees and plants. These might include propagation, tree maintenance, coppicing, pruning,

herbalism, tree health, tree-related wildlife courses and even the folklore surrounding trees.

Beyond this, the Arboretum will hopefully attract a wider audience and could be a venue for outdoor concerts or plays, poetry recitals, painting, botanical and wildlife drawing and photography classes, wildlife study sessions, weddings, among many others.

The Arboretum also has the potential to be a nature reserve of some significance. We hope to create a place in which a range of flora and fauna become established, and – if we can – we will try to connect them to other green spaces nearby through green corridors.

We are also in discussions with third parties about establishing a carbon storage scheme, which will run alongside our mainstream activities.

And it goes without saying that we are open to other suggestions as to what else the Arboretum for East Anglia might offer. Great projects can grow from the smallest of ideas, just as the largest of trees can grow from the smallest of seeds.

Time to Act

*Trees inspire us. We look up to them. We sit under them. We walk among them.
And we have very strong emotional attachments to them.*

The loss of a single sycamore on Hadrian's Wall was lamented by people not only in Northumbria where it grew, but across the UK and even round the world.

We mourn the devastation caused by Dutch Elm disease, Ash Die Back and Sudden Oak Death. We worry about the impact of future diseases such as *Xylella Fastidiosa* which has yet to reach these shores.

East Anglia has fewer trees than other parts of the country, so nurturing and protecting our much-loved woods, forests and individual specimens is even more important.

Creating an Arboretum for East Anglia will give trees in the region a much-needed boost. It will raise the profile of trees in the area. It will encourage people to find out more about this most important of plants and it will be a centre for education and learning. By establishing a scientific resource we hope to stimulate research which will aid the discovery of disease resistant species and develop strategies to combat future threats.

If ever there was a time to act to protect trees throughout East Anglia it is surely now when the threat posed by habitat loss, climate change and disease is so great.



Creating the Arboretum for East Anglia

*We are determined to make the Arboretum look truly spectacular,
both from the outside looking in and the inside looking out.*

Paths will take visitors on different journeys and will lead them to a series of stunning vistas. Information boards will explain in detail about the trees and planting. Native hedgerows will act as boundaries between different zones.

There will be huge groups of trees of the same genus such as Beech, Lime, Oak, Birch, Maple and Alder. The much-loved English Oak, for example, will be grown alongside the Turkey Oak and a range of North American Oaks. Blossom trails in spring will be balanced by avenues offering spectacular autumnal colours. Expect to see orchards with rarely grown heritage fruits and unusual varieties of Mulberry, Medlar and Quince.

A central feature might include an ice house, bat cave or a small lake. There will be a great deal of wildlife input including hibernaculum, bird boxes, owl boxes and log piles.

The facilities will also be architecturally unique as we hope to build an earth shelter within which would be offices and possibly, in time, a café, interpretation centre, teaching room and workshop.

The inspiration and driving force behind the Arboretum for East Anglia is Jon Rose, owner of specialist plant nursery Botanica in Campsea Ash, Suffolk. Botanica is well known nationally as growers of rare, botanical and not commonly found trees. Jon has curated private arboreta for his tree enthusiast clients, so brings a wealth of experience in design and planting. The nursery has a fine reputation for its extensive range of rare botanical trees and is well placed to provide some of the initial stock and to source the rarest of species and individual specimens.

We are currently seeking a location for the Arboretum and are open to offers. Ideally it will cover about 100 acres, which is space for up to about 5,000 trees.

The Charity

Underpinning the whole project will be a charity.

While we have yet to decide upon the precise organisational structure for the charity itself – that is going to be an issue for future trustees to agree upon – it is likely that The Arboretum for East Anglia will be a Charitable Incorporated Organisation.

There are many benefits of a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, especially limited liability for trustees and those involved.

As we are right at the start of the project we are looking for people who might want to be part of the charity at its inception, and play their part in helping shape its direction.

So we are seeking:

- **patrons who could put their name behind the charity**
- **trustees including a Chair, Secretary and Treasurer**
- **supporters who might get involved with specific projects – these could be organisations, businesses or individuals**
- **future volunteers who might help carry out activities such as ground clearance, tree planting, ditch digging, coppicing and the many jobs associated with woodland maintenance.**

If you would like to be part of this charity and help create something really special in the region please speak to Jon Rose, who is the lead and inspiration for this project on 01728 747113 or email him at: info@botanica.org.uk.



The Challenges

We are aware that there are many challenges ahead and that it will take several years to create the Arboretum for East Anglia.

It will take even longer for the trees to become established, though after a few years the shape and structure of the Arboretum will definitely be very apparent.

It is inevitable that there will be some ups and downs on the way and we just ask everyone who is behind the project to help us overcome obstacles and help create a truly original and exciting natural resource.

The costs of establishing the Arboretum for East Anglia are probably one of our biggest challenges. With farmland selling for about £10,000 an acre, we could be looking at £1,000,000 before any trees are planted. That's why we are really hoping that some very generous individual or organisation might either donate the land, or lease it to us at a peppercorn rent for a very long time.

We envisage that the Arboretum might have a trading capability that could open up income streams to offset costs. These might include the sale of trees; the sale of carbon 'credits' or similar, the hiring of facilities for events and possibly memberships to individuals or organisations. We will also seek support from charitable trusts and other funds. The precise details of all this will be agreed by the trustees of the charity.

And, it goes without saying, when the charity is up and running we would be delighted to receive any donations from organisations or members of the public.

Keep in touch

*At the moment we are a truly tiny team, but we hope that this will change very soon
as word about the project spreads.*

There are plenty of opportunities to get involved in the project at this very early stage. We are just starting out and hope to create something that could last centuries.

Projects of this scale, ambition and nature are rare, so this is the most exciting time to express an interest in what we are doing.

Visit our website www.eastanglianarboretum.org.uk and add your name to our mailing list. We will keep you updated on how we are getting on and tell you about any exciting developments.



“The best time to plant a tree is twenty years ago.
The second best time is now.”



