

# MINI and Earthwatch launch Ireland's first Tiny Forest

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Credit ©INPHO/Morgan Treacy

MINI Ireland together with conservation charity Earthwatch Europe, have launched the first "Tiny Forest" Initiative in Ireland at the Tolka River Project, a community-based rehabilitation programme in Co. Dublin. Close to 600 indigenous trees will be planted in a 195m<sup>2</sup> space, the same size as a tennis court. Attending the Tiny Forest launch in Mulhuddart during National Tree Week were Ministers Roderic O'Gorman and Jack Chambers.

The aim of this partnership with Earthwatch is to raise awareness for local environmental projects and strengthen community bonds. Green spaces provide a place where people can learn about nature as well as exercise, relax and reduce stress levels and is the reason why the Tolka River Project centre and was chosen as an ideal location.

Like the all-electric MINI, "Tiny Forests" are remarkable due to their enormous efficiency in a small- spaces: 600 indigenous trees are planted especially close to each other on the area of a tennis court and allowed to grow in a completely natural way. The result: up to 30 percent more density, up to ten times faster growth and up to thirty times better absorption of carbon dioxide. This, in turn, will attract more than 500 animal and plant species over the next three years and transform the "Tiny Forest" into an accessible mini-ecosystem. A range of locally-sourced indigenous trees are being used in the project including, Silver birch, Alder, Hazel, Hawthorn and Gorse. This mixture of different native trees will grow to create the natural layers of a forest.

## **Sharing knowledge, inspiring people**

"This Tiny Forest symbolically shows that recovery is something that needs to be looked after, the growth of this forest and the requirement of looking after is symbolic in nature to recovery. We plan on using this space to develop Recovery based programmes such as Mindfulness, yoga in

addition to using it as a social space so we are grateful for the collaboration with MINI Ireland and Earthwatch,” says Gerry Ryan, Service Manager at Tolka River Project.

“Tiny Forests provide rich opportunities for connecting young and old alike with the environment and sustainability,” explains Louise Hartley, Tiny Forest Officer at Earthwatch Europe: “It’s vital that we give people the knowledge and skills to protect our natural world and inspire them to take positive action. We are delighted to be working with MINI Ireland and bringing the first Tiny Forest to Ireland with the help of the local community.

“MINI are really excited to bring the Tiny Forest movement to Ireland with Earthwatch and we hope that the local community enjoy the benefits of this programme. Our shared values of sustainability and bringing people together is what makes this such a great partnership, this project brings to life what our Big Love Strategy is all about,” says Julie Bothwell Head of Sales and Marketing for MINI Ireland.

Thanks to the active support of clients from the Tolka Valley River Project and residents of Mulhuddart, Earthwatch will collect a lot of data in the “Tiny Forest” over the coming years to learn more about topics such as carbon absorption, thermal comfort, biodiversity, and the social benefits of such green spaces in an urban area. The focus is always on cooperating with local institutions.

**admin**