Biodiversity in Utrecht Science Park
Course towards 2035

You are looking at an impression of the Utrecht Science Park, an area of more than 350 hectares. In this area, Utrecht University will take various measures from now until 2035 to strengthen biodiversity. We do this by restoring local biodiversity and making the connection with surrounding green landscapes.

In various places on the map, you can see drawings of natural elements. By clicking on the plant icon, you can read more about what that particular measure will do for biodiversity. If you want to know more about the exact location of these elements in Utrecht Science Park, take a look at the management plan.
Nature-friendly banks

Many of the animal and plant species that we want to invite back to the Utrecht Science Park benefit from trenches with good water quality and nature-friendly banks. Nature-friendly banks have a shallow embankment, which increase in surface area and provide a more suitable habitat for fish, insects, (water)birds and marsh plants. Some banks in the USP are already nature-friendly. We aim to realise the remaining banks in 2023 and 2024. Would you like to know more? Read the management plan.

Icon species: the sedge warbler
This bird lives near the water. The sedge warbler prefers to be found along trenches and in marshes in combination with reed and shrubbery. Constructing a few hectares of nature-friendly banks will create space for the sedge warbler to live and breed.
Ponds

Ponds, or pools, are very important for amphibians, insects, water plants and some bird species. In the Utrecht Science Park (USP), a number of new pools will be created. These will preferably have a shallow embankment, a diameter of 20 metres and be located close to wood growth. Want to know more? Read the management plan.

**Icon species: the crested newt**
This newt lives in and around (shallow) standing water. Crested newts live on land, but mate and breed in the water. We know that the crested newt inhabits the south and north-east of the USP. By constructing a number of pools in close proximity, the ponds will form a natural bridge for the crested newt.
Wood bank

Wooded banks, which include tree- and shrub lined avenues, provide a potential habitat for numerous animal and plant species. In Utrecht Science Park, the existing and newly formed wood banks will be home to animal species such as Deer, Pine marten, Nightingale and Badger. A wooded bank is a boundary consisting of a series of closely planted trees and shrubs. In order to strengthen biodiversity, the university is planting a varied selection of indigenous trees and shrubs on the sites where new wood banks are created. Want to know more? Read the management plan.

Icon species: the roe deer
The roe deer predominantly lives in woody areas with open spaces and fields, but you can also find it in a heathland or arable land. Deer readily adapt to cultural landscapes, provided that there is sufficient cover, food and rest. With the upcoming green links and ecologically managed grasslands, the USP will become a more suitable habitat for roe deer.
Winter food plots

These are fields or field margins where the grain remains in winter and serves as food for field birds. The field margins will be about nine metres, with three strips of three metres wide. The two outermost strips should serve as winter food plots. The middle strip provides space for grass, clover and herbs in which ground-breeding birds can possibly nest. Want to know more? Read the management plan.

Icon species: the grey partridge
These partridges can grow up to thirty centimetres and mainly eat grass, herbs and grain. They eat insects every now and then. The grey partridge is an endangered species, which makes it all the more important to welcome them into the Utrecht Science Park (USP) and its surroundings. In March 2021 grey partridges were spotted on a recently constructed beetle bank in Bunnik. Therefore, the intended winter food plot will be located on that side of the USP.
Meadow orchards

Meadow orchards are fruit orchards in which the first side branches do not sprout until 1.80m or higher. The undergrowth in such orchards consists mainly of grasses and herbs. Butterflies, insects, little owls and other bird species particularly benefit from an orchard. Almost one hundred years ago, more than twenty percent of the USP consisted of meadow orchards. Want to know more? Read the management plan.

Icon species: the wall brown
This butterfly prefers moist to fairly dry vegetation with a mosaic of bare ground, low vegetation and higher herbrich ruins. The female lays her eggs on stems or on the tops of leaves of various grasses. This is also called 'depositing eggs'. Examples of nectar plants for this butterfly include red clover, creeping thistle and brown knapweed.
Ecologically managed grass

Grasslands, lawns and verges form an important (potential) habitat for all kinds of animal and plant species. Herb and flower-rich grass strips offer shelter, food and structure. Ecological management of this grass means mowing in phases twice a year. Phased means that part of the grass can continue to grow. The grass clippings are removed, so that the soil becomes more atrophied. This creates more variation, striking flowery areas can be spared and this offers a greater chance of survival for insects and other small animals. This ecological management also leads to a better soil structure, which improves drainage and water storage in the soil. Want to know more? Read the management plan.

Icon species: large meadow mining bee
The large meadow mining bee is a rare wild bee that lives in extensively managed and flowery grasslands. It prefers to feed on red and white clover. This bee is sometimes found in large groups, but actually lives mainly solitary. It can be spotted from the end of April to the beginning of August.
Botanical Gardens UU

The Botanical Gardens lie at the heart of the Utrecht Science Park and, with an area of nine hectares, they are the largest academic botanical garden in the Netherlands. They have been laid out on and around the 19th-century Fort Hoofddijk. The fort is part of the ‘Nieuwe Hollandse Waterlinie (UNESCO)’.

After more than 380 years, an important function of the Gardens remains to support education and research and to house a large plant collection, which by now comprises almost 10,000 different species. In the course of time, however, these botanical gardens have also acquired a greater public function and safeguarding diversity, especially in an international context, has become an important issue to which they contribute.

Biodiversity Research Group
Since 2020, there has also been a strong focus on independent (academic) education and research. Consequently, an interdepartmental research group on biodiversity, ecosystem services, collections and education was launched in 2022 (Quantitative Biodiversity Dynamics). This builds a bridge between Utrecht University's academic research and the public that comes to visit the Gardens.
The forest, wooded banks, meadows and ponds in the Northwest Corner are of great value for biodiversity. This small patch of nature in the northwest corner of the Utrecht Science Park contains the last untouched piece of forest to be found here and is very old (19th century). All [icon] species selected by the university have their (potential) habitat in this area. For example, pine marten and roe deer have been spotted on game cameras and the populations of the little owl and nightingale have the potential to recover here.

**Area importance for grass snake**

This species inhabits this area and the university has a duty of care for the population of grass snakes. The population development of this species in the USP is therefore being monitored. By placing breeding grounds, the grass snake population in this area may increase further.
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Colophon

The information in this roadmap has been compiled and written by Utrecht University's Sustainability Programme.

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