

Veolia Orchard is branching out to new schools across the country

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On Monday 9 September, Veolia Orchard opened for applications for the third year running, reflecting the overwhelming popularity of the scheme. This scheme invites schools to increase biodiversity and become a part of Veolia's family tree by growing their own strawberries or nurturing their own orchard of fruit trees.

Since 2022, [Veolia](#) has delivered 1,085 fruit trees and 780 strawberry plants to 291 schools across the UK. This nationwide family of orchards consists of clusters of trees or strawberry patches at schools in 29 local authorities around the country.

This initiative launched in 2022, with fruit trees donated to schools in order to give young people a chance to experience the benefits of engaging with nature as well as improving local biodiversity. Building on its initial success, in 2023 the scheme expanded to include strawberry plants, ensuring that urban schools with limited outdoor green space could also participate.

Each orchard comprises either five trees or ten strawberry plants per school, an individual component of a much wider network. Schools can apply online from 9 September to 8 November. Successful candidates will then hear back from 25 November with deliveries taking place in spring 2025. Schools can opt for an interactive planting event where Veolia's experts guide students through their planting whilst educating them on its long-term benefits to the community and environment.

Pascal Hauret, Municipal Managing Director at Veolia said: "The Veolia Orchard scheme is about growing more than just fruit; it's about cultivating a love of nature in our future environmental ambassadors. I am especially happy to see this initiative continue to flourish in urban schools where there are typically fewer

opportunities to interact with the environment. Not only are we boosting biodiversity by introducing new fruit tree species, creating habitats for pollinators, and enhancing the genetic diversity of cities with urban farming, we're planting the seeds for a more sustainable future."