Veolia Orchard takes root in 500 UK schools

4 months ago

Veolia's nationwide orchard now stands at over 1,500 apple and pear trees and 1,900 strawberry plants, with each of the 500 schools joining an environmental network which encourages sustainable practices and outdoor learning.

This year's saplings all stem from the same mother trees growing apples or pears at Grow Fruit Trees' nursery in Kent. The 505 new seedlings have become a part of Veolia's family tree, alongside 1,130 strawberry plants across 213 schools.

Veolia Orchard aims to connect children with nature, achieved even in the most urban settings with strawberry plants provided for schools with smaller outdoor spaces. This spring, Veolia's hands-on planting events have guided students through proper planting techniques and how to care for their orchard correctly. The sessions help children understand how their orchard benefits their school by enhancing their green spaces and gaining access to fresh locally-grown fruit.

The schools have been supplied with peat-free soil conditioner and topsoil by Pro-Grow, helping to preserve valuable peatland habitats and prevent the release of stored carbon, supporting Veolia Orchard's carbon-neutral goals.

Pascal Hauret, Municipal Managing Director at Veolia said: "The Veolia Orchard scheme continues to demonstrate its valuable contribution to ecological transformation, growing year on year and bringing environmental improvement to more communities across the country. By branching out to even more schools in the municipal areas we support with essential recycling and waste services, Veolia is building a greener, more sustainable future for everyone and inspiring more and more young people to embrace ecological solutions for our planet.''

The Veolia Orchard scheme will return again in autumn, with the launch of the new school term. Schools will be able to apply for their own orchard or strawberry patch and join the hundreds of schools already enjoying the fruitful benefits of their plants.