

Green recovery after the ATES construction

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The activities for the heat and cold storage (ATES) on Wageningen Campus have now almost come to an end. A lot has been dug and turned upside down for this. Contractor Heijmans will restore the effects of these ground works in consultation with the ecologists of Heijmans' and the campus management. Their motto is: make everything more beautiful, more biodiverse and better than it was before.

Protecting natural elements

A great deal of excavation was done on Wageningen Campus for the construction of the ATES. This was partly done with horizontal directional drilling, so that the topsoil was not disturbed, and partly dug, also right through various natural elements. Heijmans has taken these natural elements into account as much as possible. For example, one of the new warmth wells was planned in the middle of the amphibian pond between the wings of Gaia. But after consultation it also turned out to be possible to drill it at the rear of Gaia. So the pond was spared.



The amphibian pond for Gaia has been spared.

Restoring natural elements

The warmth well to be moved therefore came between the bicycle shed and the back of Gaia, but there was a beautiful lawn with more than 20 southern marsh orchids. Yet the source had to come here and a part had to be dug for it. To save the lawn, sods were then cut, which were replaced after drilling the well and to the connection to the warmth loop. Unfortunately, it turned out that there were too few sods to close everything completely again. The remaining part was therefore sown with a grassland mixture from 'de Cruydt-Hoeck'. This mixture contains native species that suit a sparse, flowery grassland.



The warmth well has been moved from front to back Gaia.

Indigenous species

To make the campus more natural, more biodiverse and more beautiful, the same mixture plus other mixtures have also been used in other places. In addition, a number of hedges will be replanted in the autumn. Mixed hedges with indigenous species, including privet and buckthorn, were deliberately chosen instead of the single-type hedges that used to be there. In this way we reduce the chance that a hedge will be affected by diseases and it is again better for biodiversity.

Flowers for insects

A special project will be the slope of the pond along the Bornsesteeg. We are going to plant additional bulbs there in the autumn to create a stinze garden-like situation. The campus already contains many flowering plants and (fruit) trees that are important for insects. But in early spring there is still too little food for among other things bees and butterflies. Flowering bulbs in early spring will fill that gap. Undoubtedly it will be a beautiful sight when all these bulbs are in bloom in early spring.

In this way, the campus management of Wageningen University & Research, together with Heijmans, converts the 'damage' caused by the excavation work for the ATES into an enrichment. This will give us a more sustainable and greener campus with more biodiversity; more beautiful than it was!