



National Park to donate two disease-resistant elms to Brighton green space

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A beautifully-gilded tree sculpture has been unveiled in a local park to symbolise the importance of our treescape.

The English Elm, one of the oldest in the world, was destined for the incinerator after succumbing to Elm Disease.

However, a huge community effort led by artist Elpida Hadzi-Vasileva has seen the tree preserved and turned into thought-provoking art.

The striking sculpture was unveiled at Preston Park in Brighton, reuniting the tree with its “twin” elm that still stands nearby.

The pair, known locally as the Preston Twins, stood side-by-side at the city park for over 400 years after being planted in 1613 during the reign of King James 1.

Later in the year, the South Downs National Park will be donating two disease-resistant elms to Preston Park for future generations to enjoy. This is part of the Trees for the Downs initiative which aims to replace trees lost due to pests and diseases.



Claire Kerr, Countryside and Policy Manager, who leads nature recovery for the National Park Authority, said: “Brighton and Hove has 17,000 elm trees spread across its street, parks and open spaces. The city’s collection of elms is extraordinary because it’s more diverse than any other city in the world. In fact, Brighton and Hove, along with Edinburgh, are the remaining strongholds for elms in Britain.”

“There are more than 125 varieties which include different height, leaf shape, girth and even colour. The tallest, widest and rarest, are recorded as champion trees in the Tree Register, a national database of notable trees. This includes the ‘Twins’ in Preston Park,

one of which is now the Gilded Elm.”