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PRESS RELEASE OF THE DIRECTORATE OF CIVIL ENGINEERING, TRANSPORT  
AND GREEN SPACES

## **New Somei Yoshino Trees for the Aargauerstalden**

**Berne, 4 March 2019. Young Somei Yoshino trees are going to be planted in the lower area of the Aargauerstalden. So overaged specimens can be replaced and the tree population supplemented. The Japanese prefecture of Nara supports the planting with a donation.**

Once the Japanese trees on the Aargauerstalden are blooming at the end of March, the Rose Garden above will be enriched by another attraction for a short time. But the attractive Somei Yoshino trees, botanically *Prunus x yedoensis*, are not very long-living. Due to old age some trees need to be replaced. Therefore 36 young trees will be planted in March. This will happen only in the lower area of the Aargauerstalden in the direction of the former Bear Pit, the so-called Bärengraben, because the upper area is a species-rich dry meadow of national importance, providing a habitat for rare animals and plants.

The Japanese prefecture of Nara, with which the canton of Berne established a friendship agreement in 2015, supports this plantation. The Governor of the prefecture visited Berne in 2016 and discovered the Somei Yoshino near the Rose Garden. With the donation, the prefecture of Nara would like to make it possible for the people of Berne and their guests to continue to enjoy the «cherry blossom». The cherry blossom season is indeed a special and important time in Japan: Families and friends gather in the parks in the spring and celebrate the beauty of the trees with cherry blossom festivals. This tradition is called hanami – in English «flower viewing».

### **Somei Yoshino from Nara**

The city of Berne originally also owes the existing trees at the Aargauerstalden to a donor from the Japanese prefecture of Nara. In 1975, Yoshiyuki Urata had donated 100 Somei Yoshino trees to the city of Berne. The Somei Yoshino tree is one of the most popular cherry trees in Japan and common in the prefecture of Nara. However, as the

import of the plants is very complicated, the prefecture of Nara decided this time to make a financial contribution.

**For further information** you can contact Tobias Würsch, Head of Development and Realization, Stadtgrün Bern, phone +41 31 321 73 66.

**Advice to the journalists:** The pictures can be downloaded under [www.bern.ch/medienmitteilungen](http://www.bern.ch/medienmitteilungen).