## Miyawaki forests

are named after Akira Miyawaki (1928-2021), a Japanese botanist with a passion for trees. As he traveled around his country, he noticed groves of large, mature trees in Shinto shrines. He was surprised how healthy these trees were despite growing very close together. He wondered: What if people planted small, compact mini-forests *in cities*? Would that help to clean the air, cool the streets, and combat climate change? **Yes, it would!**

His idea caught on, and now there are hundreds and hundreds of small (and large) Miyawaki forests around the world, and many are in New England, including

345 Harvard St, Brookline,
Danehy and Greene-Rose Parks, Cambridge,
Natick High School, Natick,
Somerville High School, Somerville,
and Watertown! (corner of George and Orchard)




## Forests for Watertown

is an all-volunteer Working Group of Trees for Watertown. In October 2024, we collaborated with the City of Watertown, the School District, Watertown Community Gardens, and *everybody* to plant the first Miyawaki forest in Watertown. It could not have happened without generous support from the Bosch Community Fund.

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# FORESTS FOR WATERTOWN

First **preserve** the trees and forests we already have.

Secondly, **plant mini-forests**.



## Watertown's Miyawaki Forest

was planted October 26, 2024 by more than 200 volunteering teens, parents, kids, elders, and neighbors. At George & Orchard Streets, it's in a corner of the JR Lowell Elementary schoolyard, with over 700 trees of 60 species in a spot the size of a tennis court.

Come, watch it grow up!




Our Forest has a semi-circular outdoor classroom facing the school – in 5 years, it'll feel like a forest "hug," blocking the view and sound of traffic on Orchard Street.

## How big are these forests?

A Miyawaki forest can be as small as a parking space or as big as a soccer field. Ours is 2000 square feet, likef a singles tennis court. 743 trees were planted in a single, festive Planting Day and mulched, watered, and fenced in. After the baby forest had settled in for a year, we planted a border of native perennial plants to protect the forest floor from drying winds.

resources

*Mini-Forest Revolution,* Hannah Lewis
*The Genius of Trees,* Harriet Rix
*How To Love a Forest,* Ethan Tapper
tinyurl.com/diyMiniForest
tinyurl.com/TinyForestHandbook
leaflimb.com/wonder/
Bio4Climate.org

## The Miyawaki Method

skips over the "successional stages" of a natural forest, in which a patch of bare land must be left alone for centuries as it grows weeds, then shrubs and fast-growing, fast-dying (40-150 years) "pioneer" trees, that are replaced by "climax forest" trees that can live for several hundred years. Can a city leave bare land alone for centuries? No.

The Miyawaki Method ...

- loosens the compacted soil (as weeds and pioneer trees would do naturally)
- adds organic matter to feed soil microorganisms (as the decaying weeds and pioneer trees do naturally)
- plants only "climax" tree species, *very densely* to promote fast, upward growth

## Experience Wild(ish) Nature

right here in the City – experience it as a place where you bump into neighbors and have nature-sweetened conversations

**Experience it up close**: help us care for the forest over the next few years.

- We need more **Core Teammates**, who love forests and love to learn by doing and to lead by collaborating.
- And we need **Pop-In People**, who want to care for the forest for an hour or two now and then, when they can (weeding, mulching, much more). Very short notice is given in a "PopIn" email about the task, the time, and the contact person.

Tempted? WatertownMiyawaki@gmail.com