# Process – Forest-Making

A few folks have asked what our process was in planning, planting, and caring for the Lowell School Miyawaki forest in Watertown, Massachusetts. This is a distillation of our process.

## See the Forest

As a Team, state your mission, plan, and purpose.
Arrive at it together and discover what aspects are most motivating to individuals in the team; that's where their efforts want to flow; their best problem-solving will occur there.

### Share the Vision

In the earliest days of the project, identify groups in the community that you feel would probably like to participate and would benefit. Attend a few of their meetings and then ask to inform the group about your project. Discover a liaison in the group who might join your Core Team.

Go to where the people are and get volunteers by volunteering.

- The Library
- Mothers Out Front / 350Mass / Elders Climate Action / other advocate groups
- Scouts, High School Environmental Clubs
- Fairs and Farmers Markets

A colorful, plain-English brochure is a great way to share the vision and recruit more core team volunteers / liaisons.

**Have one place where *anyone* can get the latest information** on the project and can give you their contact information because they're interested in participating. Keep it up-to-date with general, public-facing information. You can mention upcoming community events there.

**Have one place where the Core Team can keep informed** and link to useful references such as contact list, meeting dates and notes, etc.

# Planning Checklist

This is a list of relationships: within the Project Team, with the site and its larger community, with individuals and organizations that will naturally want to be involved, with native flora and fauna of the area, and with the forest itself.

*[Link to useful references such as Team Contact List; calendar of events and opportunities, etc.]*

## Planning with the Miyawaki method

The Miyawaki Method urges

- active community involvement in
    - forest design and access,
    - planting the forest,
    - learning about the trees there,
    - mulching, weeding, and watering very conscientiously for the first two or three years as the forest gets its rooting,
    - and then respectfully letting it grow without interference.

The method involves

- careful species selection among native trees found in climax forests with similar conditions;
- preparing the soil in response to the properties of the existing soil;
- dense planting of species that will reach four levels at mature growth: canopy, tree, sub-tree, and shrub;
- protective fencing and mulching to prevent destruction by animals or competition from weeds.

## Your Core Team

Grow your team.
Together discuss and define the things that need doing,
then each person selects their focus area(s)
and can act with authority and autonomy while supported by the whole team.
Ideally, one or two people will be aware of everything going on in the project so they can help link related efforts and fill gaps due to travel or illness.

Practice collaboration and problem-solving through the entire process so that come the day(s) that a crisis erupts, the habit of working together carries the day. (Otherwise, some individual coping behaviors may create barriers to working together.)
Consider the difference between a Team and a Committee. Go for a Team.

# Planning Trees & Shrubs

Plan what you would love to plant: Your Tree & Shrub wish list

Contact nurseries

Adjust the list according to what is available by mid-summer for a fall planting.

Place your order with delivery date. (You many not have to make any payment until delivery.)

Anticipate accepting delivery before Planting Day, preparing the plants, and protecting them for the interim. Consider ordering tree tags and allow time for attaching them to the trees.
*NOTE: tree tags are good for a very short time, as you sort species for planting, as you map your forest (if you want to map it), and as you note what has survived or died in the first year. But if left in place around the trunk, plastic tree tags kill trees by strangling their cambium layer.*

Resources for tree selection
Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center - The University of Texas at Austin
Specify Your Location - Native Plants Finder
Keystone Plants by Ecoregion
Power Plants

Hart Hagan advises to cross reference your region from the Keystone Plants by Ecoregion with the results you get from your zip code at this link. Native Plants (By Zip Code) - Native Plants Finder

# Before Planting 🪣

*[Link to useful references such as "roles" information for who's doing what; tree list; materials list; volunteer list, etc.]*

This is a detailed list of the two or three weeks just before Planting Day.

- DATE(S) – (City) MARKING FOR DIGGING; SOIL PREP
    - SITE PLAN complete; Site marked – adjust to include perennial border 3' wide
    - SOIL PREP starting _____, complete by ____ [example list:]
        - Scrape turf and discard
        - Dig & loosen to a depth of ___"
        - Add amendments and mix;
        - Protect soil by ... [e.g., cover with tarp/cardboard/wood chips]
- PLANS & PURCHASES
    - Order amendments for delivery by _____
    - Order rabbit/deer fencing for delivery by _____
    - Order materials to mark planting areas of square yard/meter [e.g., twine and landscape staples]
- DATE(S) – MARK SITE: mark planting spots [e.g., pie wedges / square yard-or-meter]
    - mark perimeter on outside edge for fencing (____')
    - mark Planting Spots
- DATE(S) – PLANTS
    - double-check availability and delivery dates for the plants
    - by _____ prepare the Tree Prep Area where plants will be delivered, prepped, and protected

More about tree prepping

- prune as needed, branches and roots
- tag each tree with white plastic tag* (to be removed within 2 years)
    - level (1-canopy, 2-tree, 3-subtree, 4-shrub)
    - species & common name
    - special placement if needed

**NOTE: tree tags are good for a very short time, as you sort species for planting, as you map your forest (if you want to map it), and as you note what has survived or died in the first year. But if left in place around the trunk, plastic tree tags kill trees by strangling their cambium layer.*

# Planting Day 🌱

This is the Forests for Watertown Planting Day check list to serve as a model to tailor.

Date Sunrise ____ am, Sunset ____ pm

- ☐ SET UP (7am-9:30am)
  - ☐ Create Numbered Tree Kits • Place Kits on Numbered Square Meters
  - ☐ Buckets of mulch, one in each square
    – TRIAL: florist bucket of wood chips on sq meter = what depth of mulch? How about for 5-gal buckets? How many 5-gal buckets could we borrow for the day? Minimum 8 needed to keep up with planters
  - ☐ Tools for volunteers - placed on Squares (about 8 to 10 squares at a time have tools); tools move to next square when one is planted
  - ☐ Tents, tables, chairs – Mark owner's name clearly on each – Registration Tent, Rest & Refresh Tent for Staff; Refreshment Tent for Volunteers (table but no chairs); Demo tent (possibly)
  - ☐ *Set up kid activities (unload, set up, secure, make signs if needed)* Kid activities - supplies need to be gathered (from different locations and requested from other volunteers who may have them to contribute), delivered, set up; signage
  - ☐ Signs – DEMO, Toilets this way, Registration this way, CHILD ZONE 2 signs, move as needed
  - ☐ Documents – Waiver-FFW-MiyawakiPlantingDay-2024-10-18 , Sign-in sheets to match Volunteer Sign Ups and to accept walk in volunteers.
- ☐ DEMONSTRATION - 15 minutes on the hour (since Volunteers were scheduled to arrive on the hour)
  - ☐ How to plant
  - ☐ Your Guide – pair up, two per team; two teams per Guide
- ☐ PLANTING
  - ☐ Space plants, dig hole, root flare level with ground, add duff, water
- ☐ QUALITY CONTROL
  - ☐ As sections are planted, expert(s) check planting depth, replant if necessary, stake with 16" bamboo skewer if/when good
  - ☐ Then volunteer add wood chips to depth of 3" and move mulch away from trunks
- ☐ WATERING
  - ☐ As sections are planted, volunteer hoses it down gently, thoroughly; won't need watering truck on Planting Day.
- ☐ FENCING
  We'll fence in _____ square feet, using _____' of fencing. Volunteers are planting from 10am to 3pm, and we want most of the planting done before fencing begins, say about 2pm. With young volunteers still available, drive the fence posts starting at 2pm. Finish the fencing by 4.
- ☐ CLEAN UP, PACK UP

# After Planting 🌳

- WATERING
    - Water truck schedule
    - Frequency and duration of watering
- FENCE TESTING
    - Monitor for rabbit entry
    - Frequency of monitoring
    - Remedy if entry found
- OUTDOOR CLASSROOM
    - Logs for seating (for 2 years)
    - Ground cover in classroom area
    - Maintenance of area
- EXTRA MULCHING
- MAP (optional) of trees and placement; consider mapping a portion of the forest for use in community science.
- SIGNAGE
- FENCE DECORATION
    - Student art (laminated)
    - Painted signs and CDs