

# FAQ's

## What is Tiny Forest?

The Tiny Forest method uses a planting technique developed in the 1970's by Japanese botanist Dr Akira Miyawaki. Dr Miyawaki planted forests that mimicked the ancient forests of each location, using only native species in a much denser planting system that resulted in rapid growth. Tiny Forest is different from traditional planting schemes because:

- the method uses native tree species only, which are planted densely and with specific soil preparation, resulting in accelerated forest development
- less space is needed to deliver benefits (200m<sup>2</sup>, or the size of a tennis court)
- it restores nature and supports biodiversity in urban areas
- local communities are recruited to plant, maintain and monitor their forest over time, thereby connecting people with nature and raising awareness of environmental issues
- environmental and social data is collected for every forest, contributing to our scientific understanding of the benefits they provide

## Why is it important to have Tiny Forest in urban areas?

Urban areas face huge pressure from development, population growth and environmental issues such as flooding, heat stress and loss of biodiversity. Space is also at a premium.

Tiny Forests can play a part in facing these challenges. They bring the benefits of a forest – connecting people with nature and raising awareness, helping to mitigate the impacts of climate change, and providing a home for nature – right into the heart of our cities and urban spaces.

## Why would I host a Tiny Forest at my school, or in our community?

There are many benefits to hosting a Tiny Forest in your school or local community:

- The land will still belong to your school, local community or group.
- If you're thinking of planting some trees or creating a woodland anyway, doing it via the Severn Trent Games Legacy is a great way to access this valuable resource
- You'll be helping to create a valuable resource for your school or community that will offer a space of green sanctuary and a forest school to aid learning for the school and community groups

## Why is it important that the location of a Tiny Forest has public access?

Severn Trent and Earthwatch want each Tiny Forest to be enjoyed by as many people as possible. We are therefore looking for sites that are publicly accessible in an urban setting and close to communities (with the exception of school grounds where public access may not be possible).

By getting as many people as possible to enjoy these Tiny Forests we also hope that people will start to learn, understand and ultimately value the power these green sentinels play in protecting us and our future generations from the impact of a changing environment.

## If the Tiny Forest is located in a school, can other community groups use the forest?

This will need to be agreed on a case by case basis with the school where the Tiny Forest is located.



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## Who will look after each Tiny Forest?

A Tiny Forest will take care of itself, but will need some maintenance for the first 2-3 years, mainly weeding and watering. The effort required is about 1hr/week, mostly during Spring and Summer. For each forest, Severn Trent and Earthwatch will recruit and train a locally-based volunteer Keeper Team, consisting of 4-5 individuals, to maintain the Tiny Forest and care for it.

## What is the ideal location for a Tiny Forest?

The ideal site for a Tiny Forest in an urban area should meet the following criteria:

- Must have permission from the landowner to be turned over to woodland
- Ability to retain the woodland for a minimum of 10 years
- In an urban setting that is easily accessible to users (e.g. local residents, school children)
- Not have any ecological or archaeological restrictions or be within existing woodland
- Approximately 200m<sup>2</sup> for the actual Tiny Forest, plus space for heavy machinery to do preparation work so total space possibly up to 500m<sup>2</sup>. This area can be of any shape/orientation, but the forest must not be narrower than 4m across at any given point.
- No underground or overhead infrastructure (typically soil excavated to 1 metre)
- Accessible for large machinery: mini digger needed for soil preparation, plus truck delivery of straw and other soil supplements
- Possible water access point: trees may need watering during first 2 years of maintenance, so either a water access point located nearby or access for a vehicle and water bowser to the site

## What support will I receive from Severn Trent and Earthwatch?

Severn Trent and Earthwatch will support you in establishing a Tiny Forest and help you to maximise the benefits, including:

### Preparation:

- Supporting with site selection including conducting a site assessment and soil survey.
- Selecting the right tree species mix based on the site soil conditions and local reference forests.
- Designing the forest - considering shape, classroom areas, pathways and seating.

### Planting and community engagement:

- Volunteer recruitment for community or school-based planting day.
- Coordinating the planting day itself, with a trained delivery team leading the day.
- Landscape contractors conducting soil preparation and installing forest fencing, seating and information panel.
- Establishing a Keeper Team made up of 4-5 local volunteers to look after the forest once established and input into the design and planting.

### School engagement:

- Teacher and educator Tiny Forest webinars - covering global and local environmental challenges and how to engage students in experiential outdoor learning connected to the national curriculum.
- Teacher and educator training session - providing the knowledge and confidence to lead outdoor education and use Tiny Forest as a learning resource. Sessions include deeper discussions on climate change and biodiversity loss and hands-on demonstrations of activities that can be run with students at different key stages.
- Tiny Forest education resources, including materials to enable students to become citizen scientists and collect data from the forest, feeding into Earthwatch research to assess the benefits a Tiny Forest can provide.

### After Management:

Recruiting and training of a locally-based volunteer Keeper Team to look after the forest, including weeding and watering. Monitoring of the forests and citizen-science based research - schools and communities will be trained to collect data on research topics including biodiversity, carbon capture, water infiltration capacity and thermal comfort of the forest. And, you and your Tiny Forest will become part of a special community of other Tiny Forest hosts.



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## How will I become part of the Tiny Forest movement and community?

You'll have the opportunity to become part of a UK-wide network through the Tiny Forest online platform (launching in August 21). Each Tiny Forest will have its own profile page on the platform with the ability for local volunteers and partners to upload data. There will be forum space to share knowledge, ask questions and connect with landowners, Tiny Forest partners and local volunteers across the UK.

## What kind of trees will be planted?

The saplings we plant will be a mixture of native tree species, they will either be cell grown or bare root saplings, depending on the timing of planting. We will plant a mix of 600 native trees per Tiny Forest.

## Who owns the trees?

The trees will be owned by you!

## When would the tree planting take place?

The recommended time for tree planting is when they're dormant and so less likely to get damaged – November to March.

## What happens if a tree in a Tiny Forest dies?

Some mortality is expected and dead trees play an important role in ecosystems. For example, they provide homes for insects and other wildlife, as well as nutrients, among other benefits. Therefore, we leave any dead trees within the Tiny Forest to be recycled back into the forest system. Here they decompose slowly contributing to soil nutrient, improving soil structure and aiding water infiltration.



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