



Miyawaki mini forests

What are mini forests?

Miyawaki forests are an innovative approach to encouraging wildlife to thrive in populated areas. The approach was developed by Japanese botanist Dr Akira Miyawaki. Each forest is about tennis court size but can be smaller. It involves the dense planting of lots of different native species. The aim is to create an ecosystem rich in biodiversity where plants, birds, insects and other species can live and thrive with minimal disturbance. Tree species are selected to create 'layers' of differing heights, thus providing a range of different ecosystems within a modest area.

Mini forests in Norfolk

Within Norfolk, mini forests have already been planted at Fakenham, Sheringham, North Walsham, Sprowston, and Hellesdon. The effort is part of the Trees Outside Woodlands project, supported by HM Treasury and is running in partnership with Defra, Natural England and The Tree Council.

Several new ones are being planted in South Norfolk as part of their Nature Conservation Fund initiative that aims to support nature recovery and connectivity objectives across South Norfolk. Cringleford Parish Council with the help of The Conservation Volunteers planted two pairs of mini forests in December 2025 (see below), one at St Giles Park on the green spaces between Codde Close and the A11, and one on Roundhouse Park opposite The Willow Centre. Our forests are made up of a mix of native species (the composition of which is shown in the table below) grown at high density (2.5 plants/m²) to encourage rapid establishment. This will create different growth levels using that will form the eventual canopy, and others that will produce sub-layers to create as rich a biodiversity as possible.

Canopy	Trees	Sub-tree	Shrub
Major species (50%)			
Pedunculate oak	Wild cherry	Hawthorn	Blackthorn
		Hazel	
Supporting species (25%)			
Beech	Field maple	Crab apple	Cherry plum
Silver birch			
Minor species (25%)			
Goat willow	Whitebeam	Bird cherry	Dog rose
Hornbeam	Rowan	Elder	Dogwood
Sessile oak	Small-leaved lime	Wild service tree	Guelder rose
Scots pine			Wayfaring tree

The ground for our mini forests was prepared beforehand by turning over 1.5m of soil and incorporating a biochar-based compost. Mycorrhizal fungus was added to aid nutrient uptake and woodchip mulch placed around the seedlings after planting.

We gratefully acknowledge financial support for our mini forests from South Norfolk and Broadland Nature Conservation fund (<https://www.southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk/environment/nature-conservation-fund>).

Further reading

For some further information, check out the websites below:

<https://www.kent.gov.uk/environment-waste-and-planning/nature-and-biodiversity/trees/trees-outside-woodland-project>

<https://www.north-norfolk.gov.uk/tasks/projects/miyawaki-forest-project/>

<https://www.horniman.ac.uk/story/the-miyawaki-method-london-forest-road-border/>

Contacts

If you want further information or would like to comment on this project, please email the Parish Clerk: Clerk@cringlefordpc.org.uk.



The two mini forest enclosures on Willowcroft Way opposite The Willow Centre with members of TCV planting the saplings (right)



The two mini forests being planted by TCV on St Giles Park between Codde Close and the A11