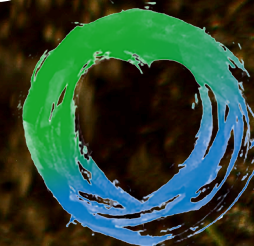




Worcester's Miyawaki Forests

Community Benefits of the Urban Wild

AUGUST 21, 2025



GREEN
WORCESTER
COOLPOCKET | MIYAWAKI FOREST

How It All Started



Evelyn Herwitz
Reporter, Author
Vice Chair, Green
Worcester Advisory
Committee

Project Inception



CITY OF WORCESTER, MA

Eric D. Batista
City Manager

WORCESTER AWARDED \$409K CLIMATE RESILIENCE GRANT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: 9/13/2023 9:37 AM

WORCESTER, Mass. – The City of Worcester is thrilled to announce it has received a \$409K climate resilience grant to plant two Miyawaki forests and design two resilient community place-making spaces.

Awarded by the Healey-Driscoll Administration's Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) program, which is administered by the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA), these grants support communities in identifying climate hazards, developing strategies to improve resilience, and implementing priority actions to adapt to climate change. Worcester is one of 79 projects to have received action grant funding in the latest round of applications.

"This grant will empower the City to take a big step forward in planting its first two Miyawaki forests, which will address urban heat islands and provide numerous climate mitigating benefits," said Chief Sustainability Officer John Odell. "Prior to planting, we will seek public input to assist in identifying possible locations for the forests that are within environmental justice communities."

Miyawaki forests are named after Japanese botanist Dr. Akira Miyawaki, who developed a method of creating fast-growing native forests that are densely arranged and multi-layered. The forests are known to help with carbon dioxide absorption and managing stormwater run-off.

"We thank the Healey-Driscoll administration for this grant as it will help grow our tree canopy and bring relief to urban heat islands as we continue to prepare our community for a changing climate," said City Manager Eric D. Batista.

The MVP program, created in 2017, provides funding for community-driven climate resilience planning and action. A total of 349 out of 351 of the Commonwealth's cities and towns are participating in the program and more than \$131.5M has been awarded for local climate resilience planning and projects.

Project team



Miyawaki Method Origin



Back Story, The Miyawaki Method



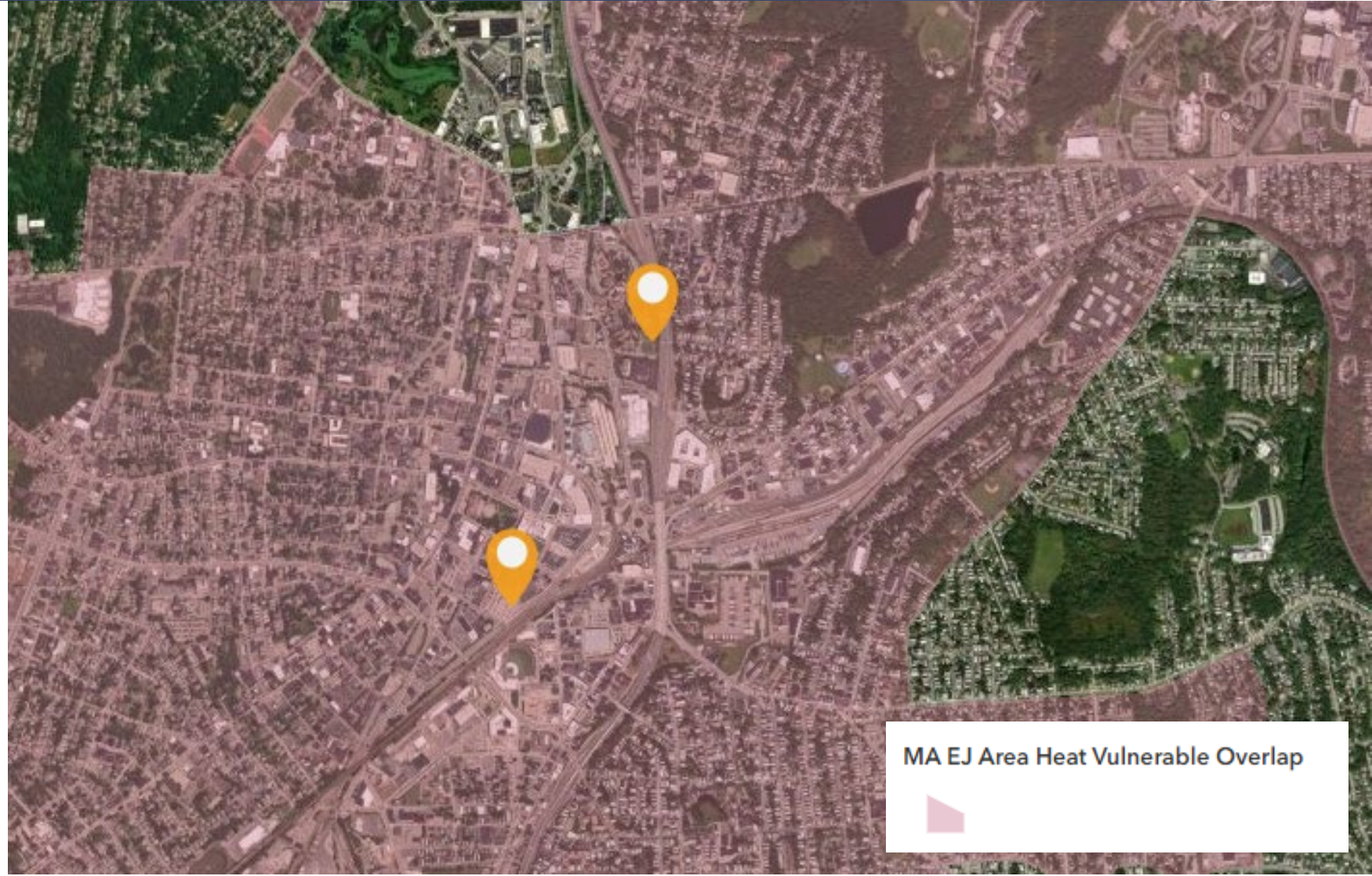
The Nippon Steel production
site in Oita, Japan

The 50 year-old Miyawaki Forest,
one of the first and oldest ones

Site Selection

Miyawaki Forests

- McGrath Municipal Parking
- Plumley Village Site (private, License Agreement)



Miyawaki Sites

- **McGrath Lot Site (public)**

- Replaced 6,500 ft. of asphalt with forest
- At maturity, approximately 20,000 ft of canopy



- **Plumley Village Site (semi-private)**

- Replaced 8,000 sq. ft. of sod
- At maturity, approximately 18,000 ft. of added canopy

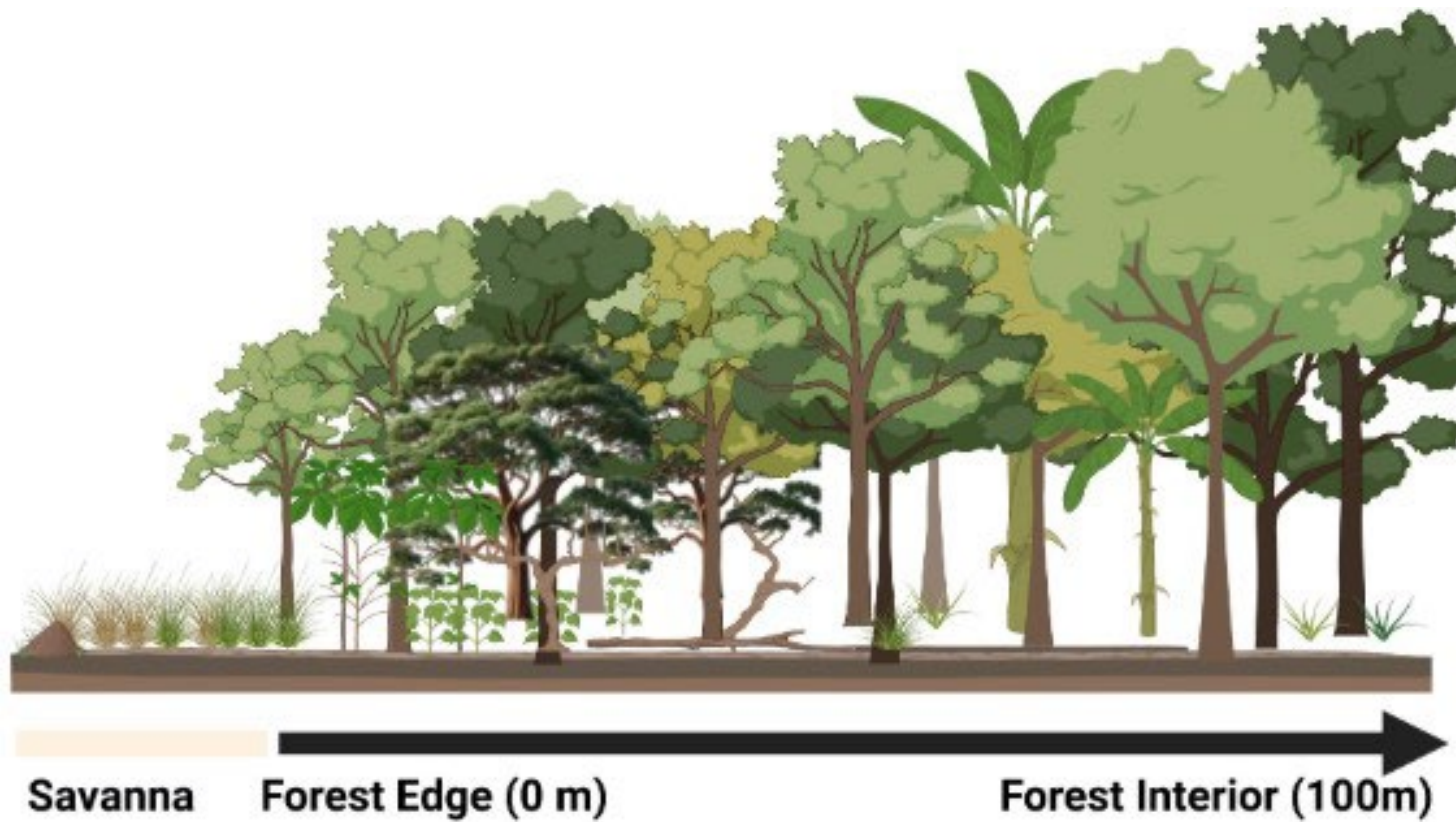
Project Benefits

■ McGrath Lot Site

- Lowers the temperature in the parking lot
- Increases biodiversity and habitat value
- Absorbs stormwater and pollution in the parking lot and along McGrath Boulevard
- Social soothing, gathering, and education
- Comparable in cost to other landscape



Project Benefits







Outreach & Education



What's New with Our Miyawaki Forests and CoolPockets Project?

Foraging Days Completed in March & April

With over 25 people showing up to forage, we were able to collect vital elements to create a forest environment, specifically those that can't be bought, propagated, produced, and are regional to the area. These materials will soon be placed at McGrath Parking Lot and Plumley Village.

Thank you to all the volunteers who came out to help in this effort!



RSVP for Planting Days

BOSTON

NEWS LOCAL NEWS NATIONAL NEWS 2024 ELECTION POLITICS CRIME COVID TRAFFIC PATRIOTS

Worcester is planting two Miyawaki forests. Here's what to know.

"The Worcester Miyawaki Forests and CoolPockets project is a step forward in promoting environmental stewardship and community well-being."

The Miyawaki forest in Cambridge's Danahey Park. *Suzanne Kreiter / The Boston Globe*

BSC GROUP 8,129 followers 6mo • Edited •

Imagine a thriving, biodiverse forest in the heart of Worcester. That future is here with the Miyawaki Forest. Spearheaded by the [City of Worcester](#) with BSC leading the project team, the Miyawaki Forest project will bring ecological richness, climate resilience, and sustainability to Worcester. This innovative approach uses the Miyawaki method: densely planting native trees to combat heat and flooding. In this new video update on the project, community liaison [Guillermo Creamer Jr](#) explains the vision and scope, detailing the planned conversion of the 6,000 sq ft McGrath parking lot into an urban eco-sanctuary. Watch the full video here: https://lnkd.in/g_vfgC9P

The Worcester Miyawaki Forest is made possible by the Massachusetts Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness program, designed to support cities and towns across the state in preparing for the challenges of climate change. [#BuildSupportConnect](#) [#WorcesterMiyawakiForest](#) [#ClimateResilience](#)

[Biodiversity for a Livable Climate](#)

McGrath Miyawaki Forest Call-to-Action
youtube.com

SPECTRUM NEWS 1

LATEST NEWS WEATHER TRAFFIC POLITICS SPORTS SHOWS OUR JOURNALISTS

WATCH LIVE Click here to watch our live stream

at the Worcester Public Library.

Climate change

United Nations • Climate change refers to long-term shifts in temperatures and weather patterns. Human activities have been the main driver of climate change, primarily due to the burning of fossil fuels like coal, oil and gas.

The Buzz with City Manager Batista | Miyawaki Forests

City of Worcester 1.22K subscribers

Share Download Clip Save

SPECTRUM NEWS 1

LATEST NEWS WEATHER TRAFFIC POLITICS SPORTS SHOWS OUR JOURNALISTS

WATCH LIVE Click here to watch our live stream

Planting Miyawaki forests and CoolPockets in Worcester

guillermo_creamerjr and bscgroup Original audio

guillermo_creamerjr Worcester residents, your voice matters! We're excited to introduce the new Crowdscore Map, a simple tool for you to share your ideas for greener solutions in our city!

Tap the link in bio to start making a difference today. Let's work together for a more sustainable Worcester!

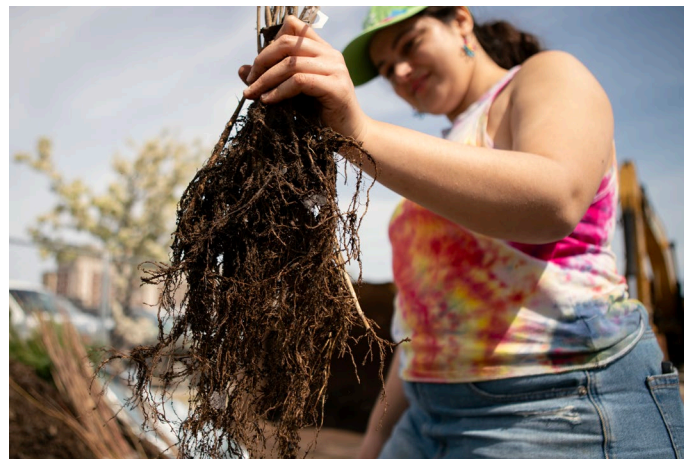
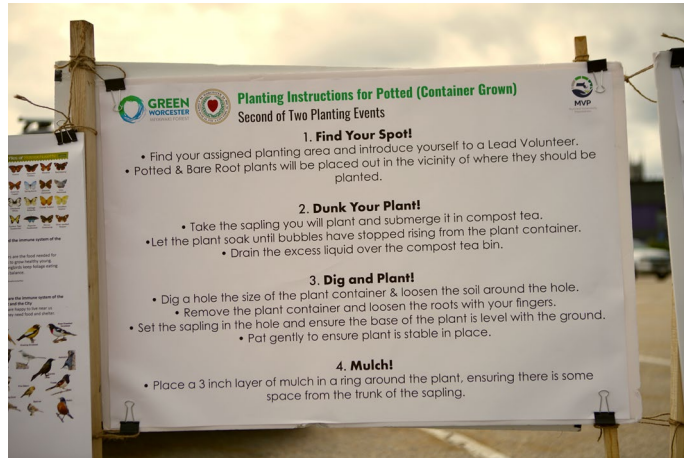
[#GreenWorcester](#) [#SustainableCity](#) [#CommunityPower](#) [#CrowdscoreMap](#) [#EcoFriendly](#) [#WorcesterResidents](#) [#MakeADifference](#) [#CityOfWorcester](#) [#Worcester](#) [#WorcesterMass](#) [#GreenWorcester](#)

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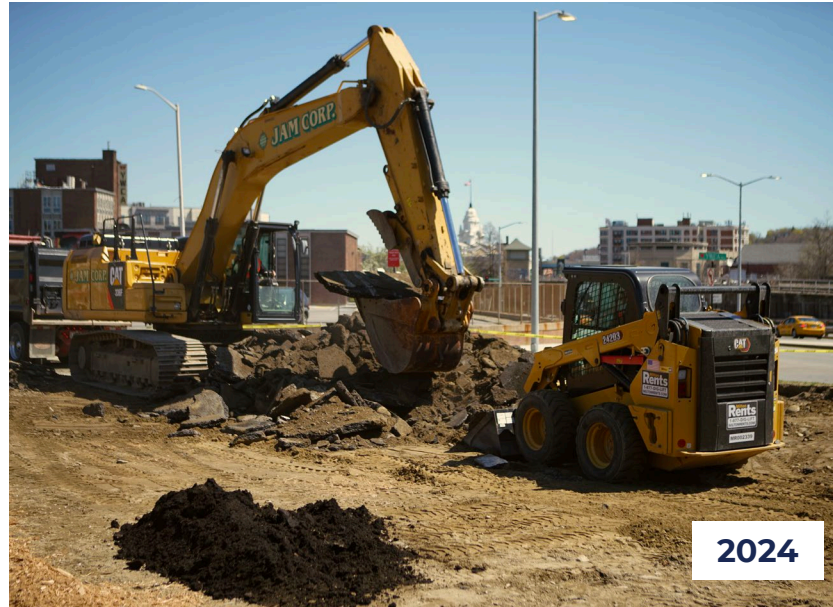
153 likes June 20

Log in to like or comment.

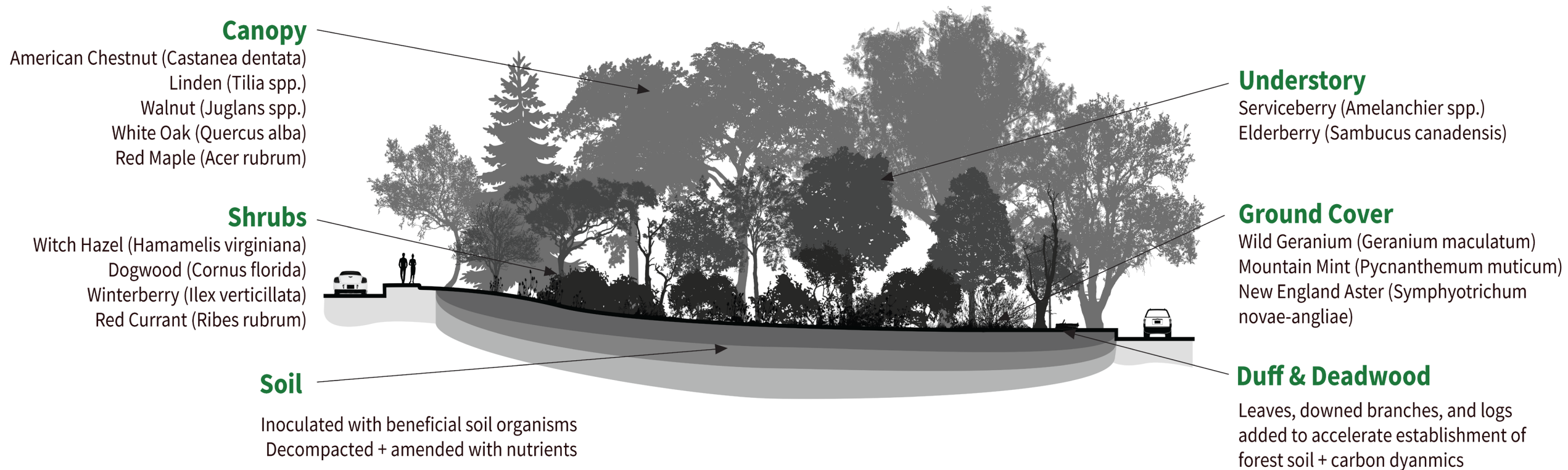
Educational Materials



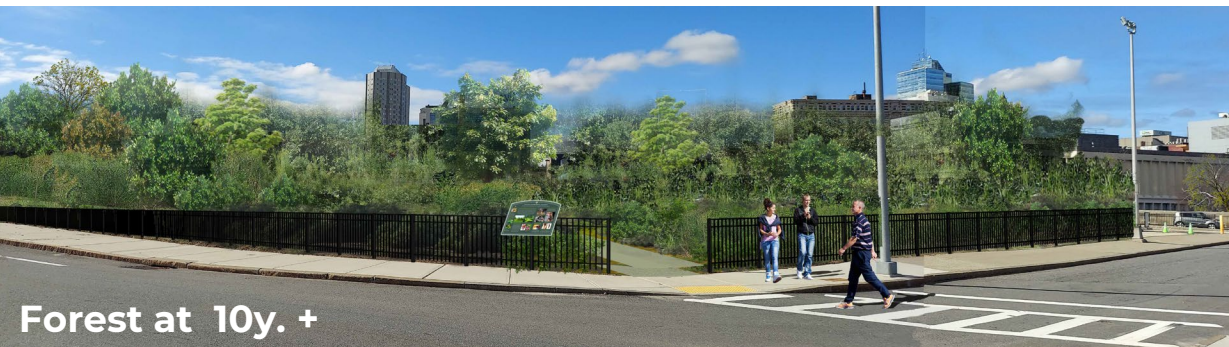
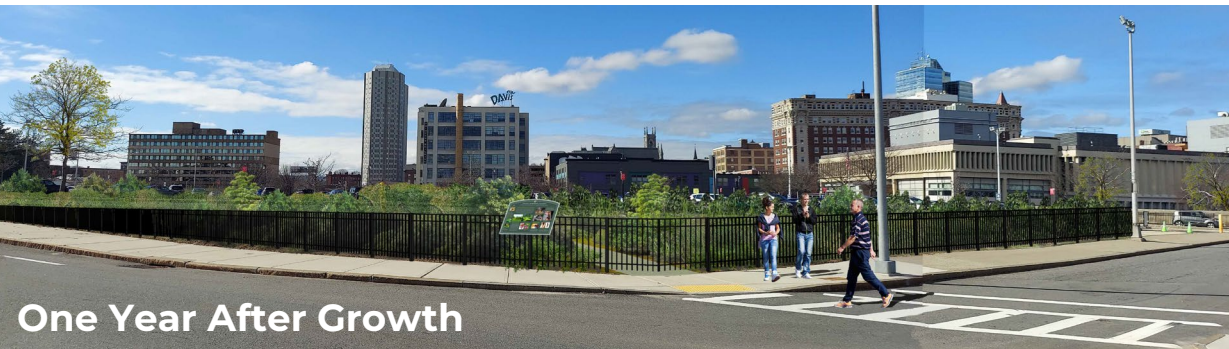
McGrath Lot Before & During Implementation



Forest Structure



McGrath Lot Growth Succession



In just 5 months, we have...

turned a section of McGrath Parking lot from this...



..into this!



McGrath Lot Growth Succession

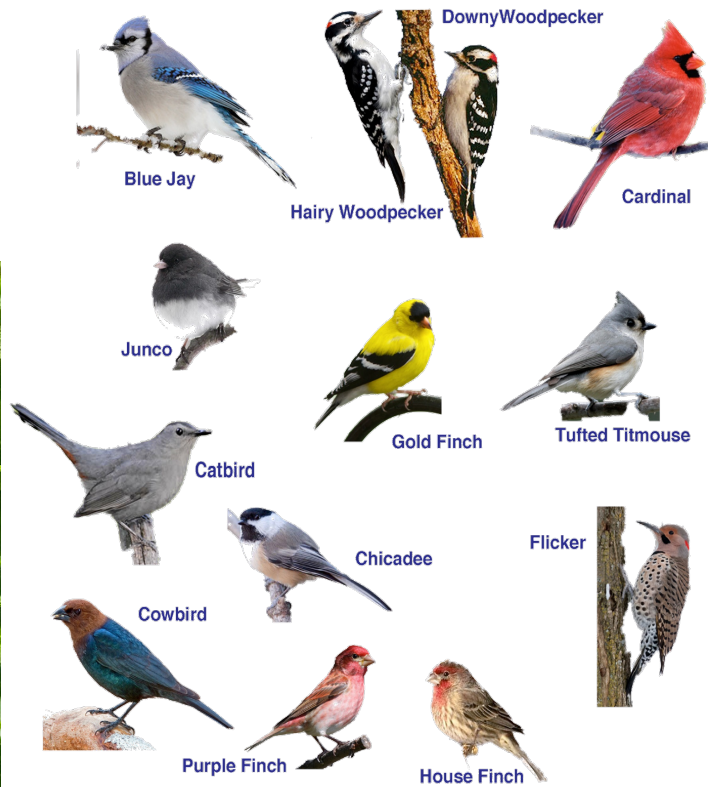
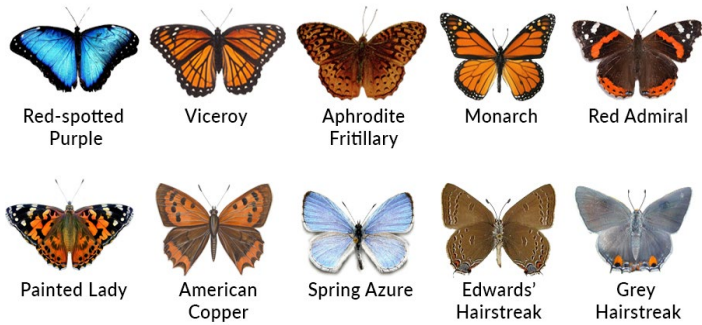


Fall 2024

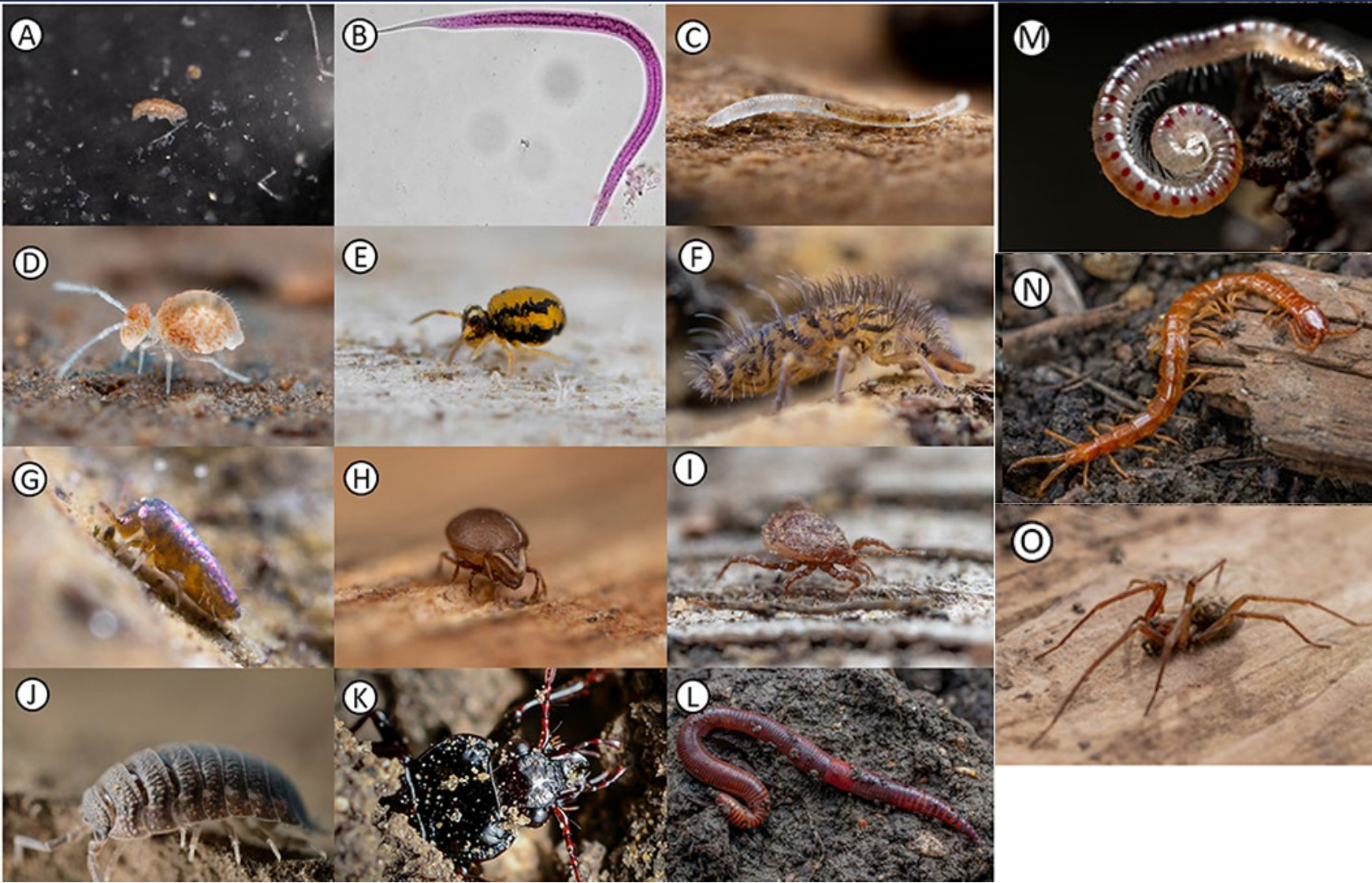


Spring 2025

Birds & Pollinators



Macroinvertebrates



Macroinvertebrates

A. Water bears

B. Nematode

C. Pot worm

(D-G) Springtails

(H-I) Mite

J. Wood lice

K. Beetles

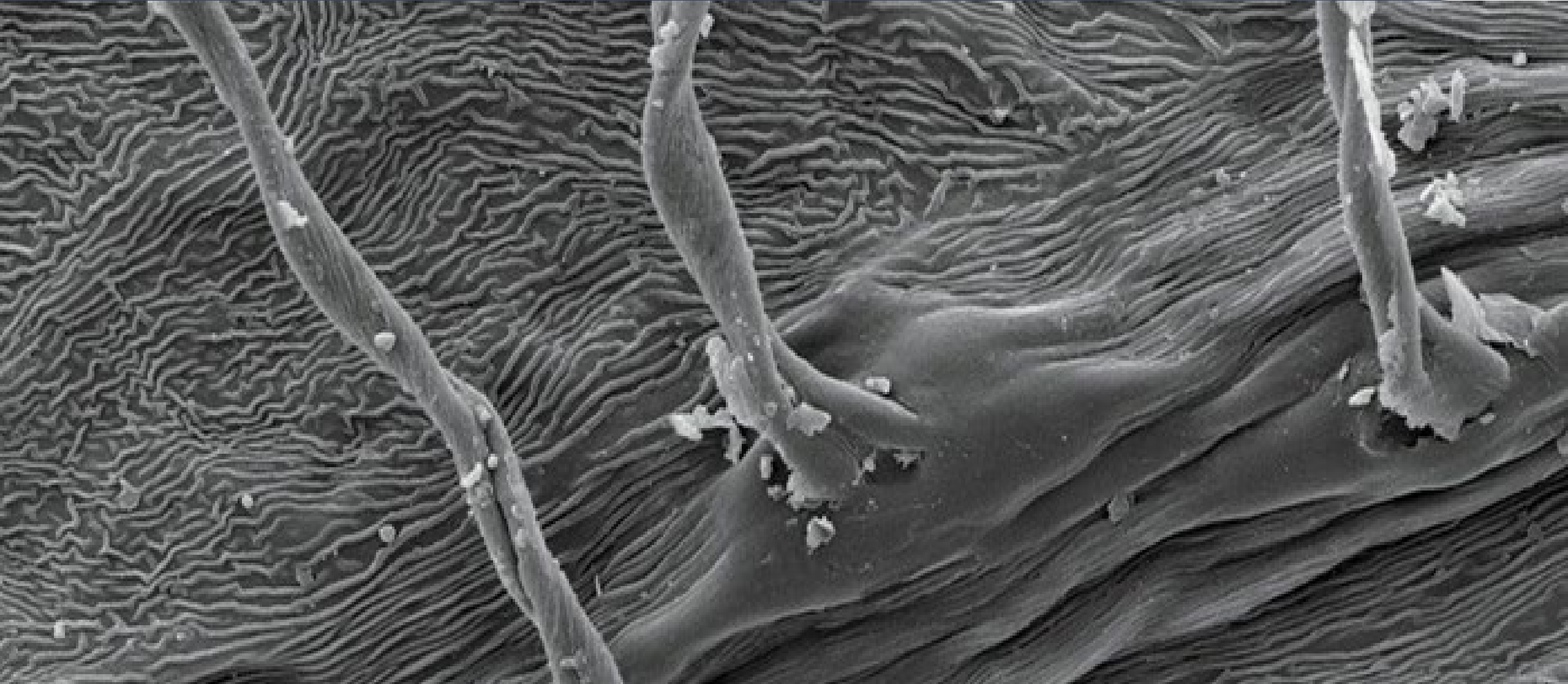
L. Earthworm

M. Millipede

N. Centipede

O. Spider

Air Quality (Birch Leaf)



Cooling The City

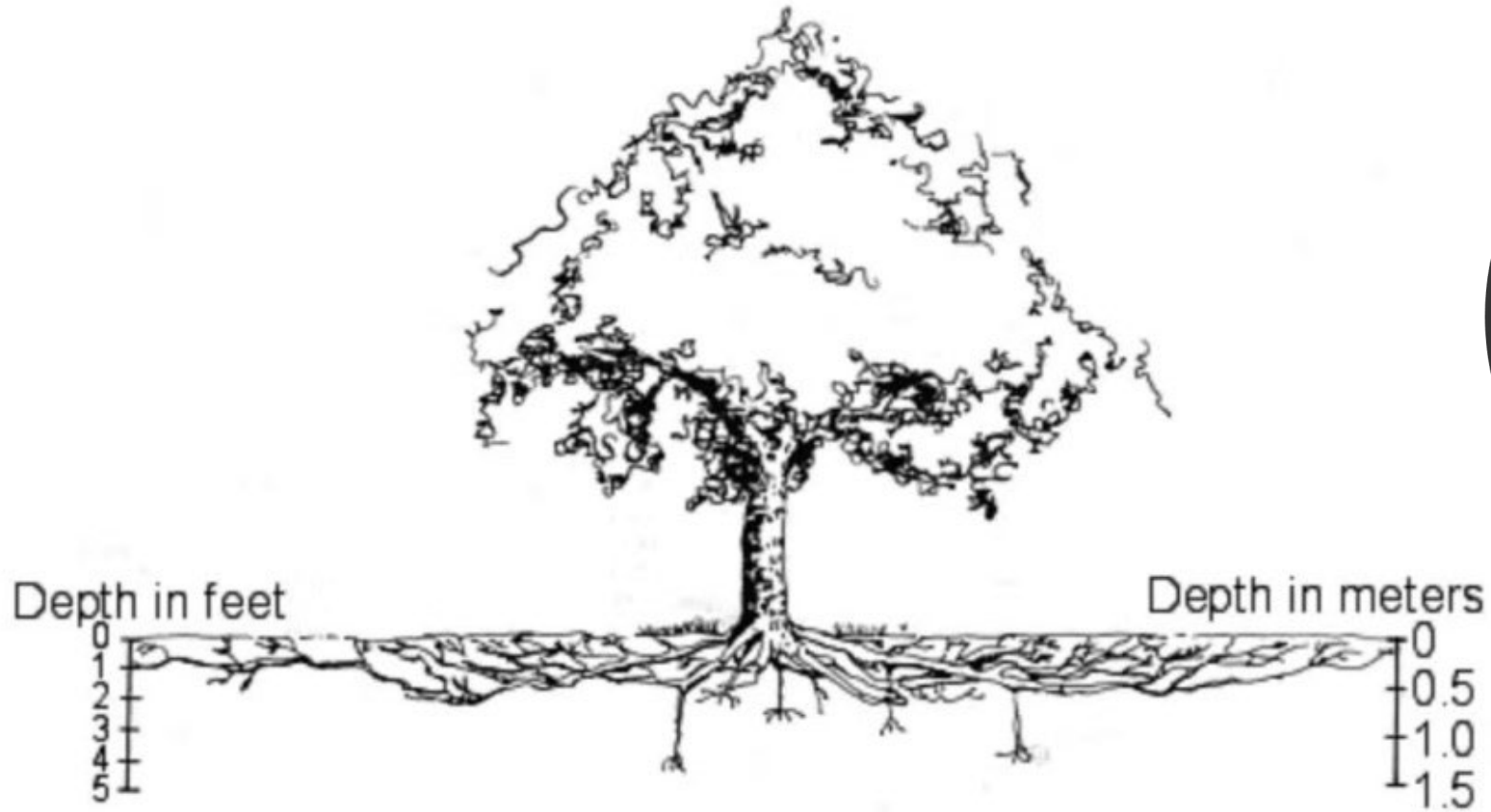


Diagram of a 'typical' root system



Learn More: Check Out Our StoryMap



Please reach out to:
greenworcester@worcesterma.gov
with questions for the city

Learn about the city's other
sustainability and resilience
projects, go to
worcesterma.gov/DSR

Multidisciplinary Project Team & Partners

City of Worcester

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Chief Sustainability Officer

Luba Zhaurova

Director of Projects

Jessica Davis

Sustainability Project
Manager

Evelyn Herwitz

Vice Chair, Green
Worcester Advisory
Committee

Ellen Foranti

Master Gardeners

BSC Group

Caseylee Bastien, RLA, CPSI

Senior Landscape
Architect and Ecologist

Aqsa Butt, SITES AP

Senior Planner & Co
Project Manager

Heather Gould, AICP

Director of Planning & Lead
Project Manager

Community Liaison

Guillermo Creamer

Project Community Liaison

Biodiversity for a Livable Climate (Bio4Climate)

Maya Dutta

Director of Regenerative
Projects

Alexandra Ionescu

Bio4Climate

Massachusetts EEA MVP Program

Hillary King

Municipal Vulnerability
Preparedness (MVP) Program
Regional Coordinator

Maintenance

Reimagined Roots

The Community Builders

Plumley Village LLC

Our Community Volunteers

Site Tour!



Outdoor Nature Scavenger Hunt

How many treasures can you find?



☐ White Oak

A plant that feeds moths, butterflies, & birds.



☐ Elderberry

A plant that produces very nutritious bird food.



☐ Black Willow

A plant that feeds animals & cleans the water.



☐ Poplar Leaf

A plant whose leaves flip and flap to soften noise.



☐ Sycamore Leaf

A plant whose fuzzy leaves clean the air.



☐ Groundsel

A plant that protects the forest from salt & feeds pollinators.

What else did you find? Write or draw it here (optional):

Turn page for next activity!



Outdoor Nature Scavenger Hunt

How many treasures can you find?



☐ Song Bird Box

Temporary housing until our trees are big enough to provide natural nesting sites.



☐ Ground Bee Box

Some pollinators live in sandy soil when a tree falls. This box mimics that home.



☐ Leaf Cuts

Holes in leaves show the forest is feeding wildlife.



☐ Cavity Nest

Branches & hollow stems are home to many pollinators.



☐ Snag Tree

Beetle holes in dead trees create nesting spaces for pollinators.



☐ Brushy Thicket

Many creatures rely on piles of fallen branches for nesting.

What else did you find? Write or draw it here (optional):

Complete this activity sheet to win a prize!



Prize: Plantable Pencils!