

City of Rochester's Mini-Forest

People
Partners
Pollinators

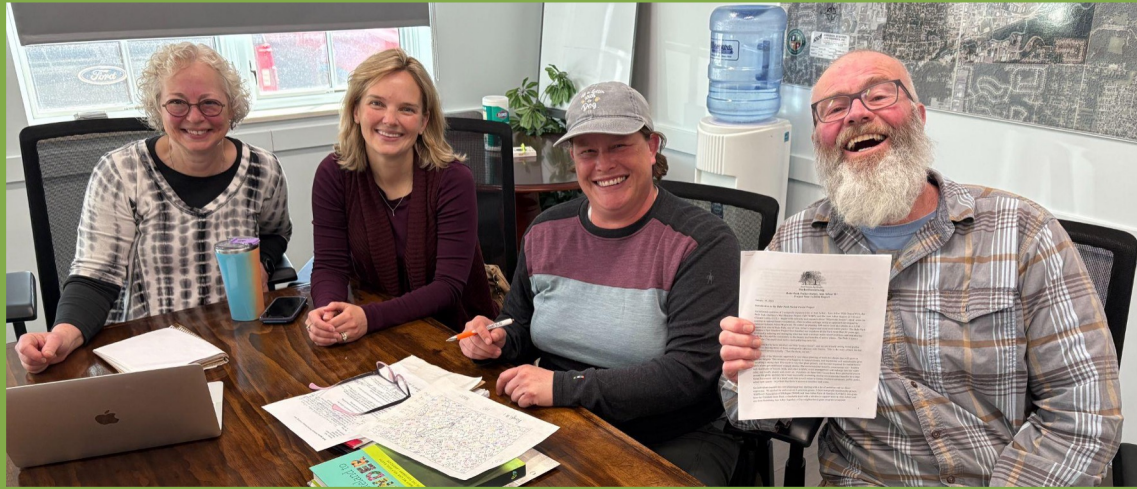


From Garbage Dump to Green Oasis

A vacant lot on the edge of Rochester — formerly a garbage dump — becomes the canvas for Michigan's next great ecological restoration story.

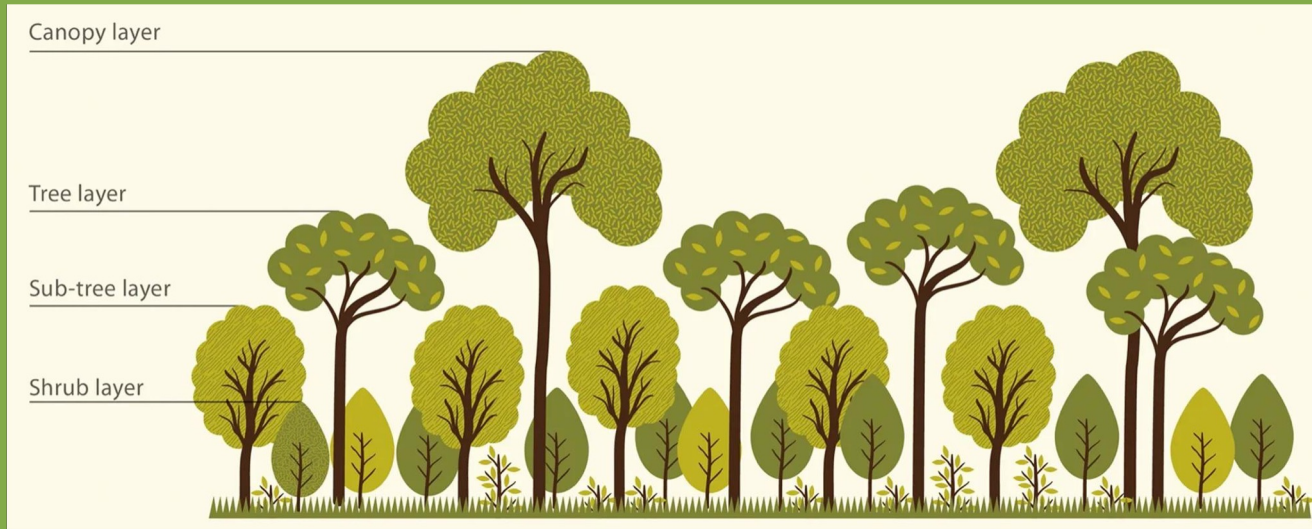


It Takes A Village



DPW prepared the soil. Parks Department designed the layout. Rochester Pollinators coordinated volunteers and secured grant funding. City Beautiful Commission and the Rochester Tree Committee brought vision and support. When grassroots passion meets city government, remarkable things grow.

The Miyawaki Method: Nature's Blueprint



Dense, multi-layered planting mimics a natural forest — canopy trees, understory trees, and shrubs all working together. Self-sustaining after just three years.

Why Miyawaki?

10x faster growth. 30x denser. 100x more biodiverse. 100% organic. In a fraction of the space of a traditional forest, the impact is extraordinary.

10x
growth

30x
denser

100x
biodiverse

100%
organic

What Was Planted?

MINI-FOREST IMPACT SNAPSHOT

1,000 SQ FT PLOT CONSISTING OF:

- 290 Plantings with a combination of: 52 canopy trees, 106, under story trees, 132 shrubs
- Over 30 native species
- Method: Miyawaki (dense, multi-layered, native forest)

BENEFITS:

Storm water Management

- +25,000–30,000 gals Annual Rainwater Absorption
- Dense root systems and layered vegetation improve infiltration reduce runoff

Carbon Sequestration

- +450–700 lbs CO₂/year (Initial Sequestration)
- +1,800–2,000+ lbs CO₂/year (Year 10+)
- High-density native planting rapidly captures and stores carbon

Temperature Reduction

- Cooling effect: lowers temps by 5–10°F

Biodiversity Boost

- Pollinators: Supports 500+ insect species including bees and butterflies
- Habitat: Provides food and shelter for birds
- Soil Health: Encourages microorganisms, improves nutrient cycling

These estimates are based upon typical Miyawaki forests, each forest may vary depending on multiple factors.

- 290 Native Trees & Shrubs
- 90% Indigenous to Oakland County
- 52 Canopy Trees
- 106 Understory Trees Across 11 Varieties
- 132 Shrubs
- Plus native milkweed for Monarchs and other native plant varieties

Earth Day: The Mother Tree Takes Root

On April 22, the City of Rochester Tree Committee sponsored and planted the Mother Tree — the anchor of the mini-forest and a symbol of Rochester's long-term commitment to its ecological future.



The Community Shows Up

36 volunteers — Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Rochester High School students, North Oakland Wild Ones, and the Daughters of the American Revolution — come together to plant 290 native trees and shrubs by hand, bringing Rochester's first mini-forest to life.



Ribbon Cutting

Upon completion, the community partners, city leaders, volunteers, and over 100 residents gathered for the ribbon cutting hosted by the Rochester Regional Chamber of Commerce — celebrating the birth of Rochester's first native mini-forest.



Three Months Later the Forest Speaks for Itself

August 7, 2025 — native canopy trees reach skyward, milkweed blooms for monarchs and pollinators, and Rochester's first mini-forest is already becoming the woodland it was always meant to be.

"It's a legacy for future generations, showing what's possible when a community comes together to care for the earth." — Mayor Salvia

