

Appendix 1 – Criteria for building a Tiny Forest in LIFE

Our dream is for every neighbourhood to have its own Tiny Forest, so we have set a number of selecting criteria to create a Tiny Forest which contributes to the LIFE – Climate Change Adaption goals. Not every forest is a true Tiny Forest. The Tiny Forest concept is the brainchild of the Indian engineer Shubhendu Sharma (Afforestt). He was in turn inspired by the forestry method developed by the Japanese botanist Akira Miyawaki. In order to ensure that the woodlands carrying the Tiny Forest name actually adhere to their forestry principles, we have registered the Tiny Forest name as a Registered Trademark® in consultation with Mr. Sharma.

Definition of a Tiny Forest

A Tiny Forest is a dense, fast-growing native woodland that is around the size of a tennis court (approx. 200 m²) in an urbanized area. The forest has not only proven climate change adaption benefits (protection during flooding, prevents heat islands and captures CO₂), but is an attractive location for butterflies, birds, bees and small mammals; and is a pleasant place for people as well. In the outdoor classroom, the local community can learn about native flora and fauna, and it provides a pleasant and healthy spot for neighbours to come together.

Physical, social and location characteristics of a Tiny Forest

The Tiny Forest checklist includes physical, location and social characteristics. Tiny Forest planted in the LIFE project are open to the public and must meet the location, social and physical characteristics.

Physical characteristics

The Tiny Forest...

- ...is the size of a tennis court (approx. 200 m²) with attached an outside classroom of (approx. 50 m²).
- ...only contains native trees and shrubbery, that have a certified Ecolabel (if available in that country).
- ...has 2 to 3 trees per square meter (adding up to 600 trees and shrubbery per Tiny Forest).
- ...has at least 20 different native tree species.
- ...has soil that has been treated according to the Tiny Forest planting method.
- ...provides space for the trees to grow old (preferred indefinitely, however, municipalities normally only commit to max. 10 years for green spaces, for the LIFE project at least 20 years is mandatory).
- ...can grow undisturbed, e.g. trees are allowed to grow as tall as they want (>20m) .
- ...lets the branches, leaves, and dead trees lie where they have fallen.
- ...is at least 5 meters wide across the full length of the forest, without interruptions (such as a path).
- ...has a layer of mulch (such as straw) at least 15 cm deep.
- ...is enclosed by a fence to protect the young trees.
- ...has a sign explaining the Tiny Forest concept.

Location characteristics

The Tiny Forest...

- ...is built where the maximal climate change adaption benefits are generated.
- ...is built in an urbanized area, select the area with the most hard surfaces (not in a natural area). If available based on heat maps.
- ...has no subsurface structures (underground cables etc.).
- ...has at least a 2 meter zone around it without buildings (so the trees can grow undisturbed).
- ...is walking distance from a school or child care facility (max. 5 min. walk).

Social characteristics

The Tiny Forest...

- ...has a local keeper team of at least 5 local volunteers.
- ...has a maintenance agreement with keeper team and municipality.
- ...is monitored by citizen scientists.
- ...was planted by local residents and schoolchildren.
- ...has been adopted by a local school or child care facility.
- ...is permanently accessible for the public.
- ...has an outdoor classroom with seating for 30 children at a time.
- ...can be used as a place for the neighbours to come together.
- ...has a calendar of events with at least 3 activities per year for the neighbourhood and the school during the LIFE's project duration (monitoring and guest lectures included).