

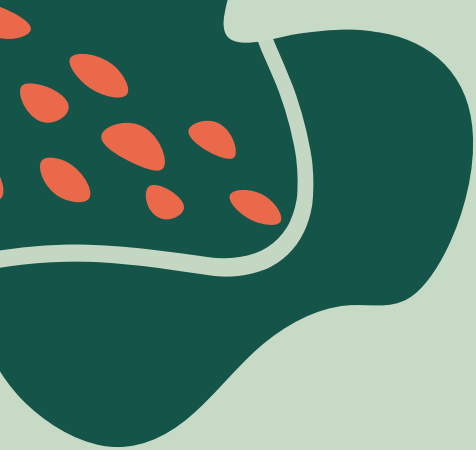


**MICROFOREST
COLLECTIVE**



8 STEPS TO MAKE A Community Microforest

A simple, proven guide to transforming your
community with a climate-cooling microforest



TIPS FOR SUCCESS

- Find great people to form a volunteer microforest team.
- Break the process into small achievable stages.
- Have fun (laugh at yourself first), be imperfect and dare to try something new.
- Celebrate each stage.
- Allow 12 to 18 months to build a microforest.





STEP 1

Form a leadership team

There are seven worksheets that will help you through this step.



1. Start conversations in your community
2. Start conversations with the wider community
3. Hold your first meeting
4. Develop a skills register
5. Create social media pages
6. Refine your mission
7. Gathering site information – uses a site matrix to help you choose best sites

If you commit to complete one worksheet every week you will have formed a team by the end of week 7.



Download the worksheets from
www.microforestcollective.com.au/resources

STEP 2

Launch a crowdfunding campaign



We've raised \$131,000 for five microforests between 2019 and 2023. So we must be doing something right.



Each community is different, but the minimum we try to raise is \$20,000. And we aim to raise the equivalent amount from grants.

We've run successful crowdfunding campaigns on a range of platforms. You are welcome to use our text, but adapt it so it reflects your community and your voice.
<https://www.pozible.com/profile/moruya-micro-forest-1>

When preparing your campaign you will need to craft a compelling story about what problems the microforest addresses and include quality photos and video.

Once you launch the campaign your leadership team will need to spend at least one day per week promoting/sharing campaign.

STEP 3

Community consultation

If you've got to this step, you've been successful in crowdfunding. Congratulations! Remember to celebrate with your team and followers.



If you are creating a microforest in a public space your local authority (usually your local council or in the ACT it's the Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate) will want you to conduct a community consultation. That's to make sure that the community understand what your project is trying to achieve and who will maintain it.

Check local authorities' rules around what is an acceptable community consultation process. Then organise a facilitation session that sets out what the project is about. Ensure you invite all the key stakeholders. Allow participants to make suggestions on other features that could be incorporated into the design. In consultations, we invite participants to vote on what's most important to them. In our projects, we incorporate the top three features the community voted on.

STEP 4

Landscape and water harvesting design

Documents required by authorities

Find out what documents your local authorities require. They may ask for:

- a Landscape Master Plan at a scale of 1:200
- a Planting Plan
- a plant list (includes common names, species names, numbers and pot sizes)
- Risk Management Plan
- Maintenance Plan
- Evidence of Public Liability and Professional Indemnity Insurance

Landscape requirements

Our community microforests comply with Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design principles and include:

- 1500 native plants (tubestock or cells)
- open spaces with informal seating
- pathways
- pollinator patches

Engage a Landscape Architect to prepare the design to local authorities specifications. Preliminary designs are presented to community and feedback incorporated into final drawings.

STEP 4 Cont.

Landscape and water harvesting design

Water harvesting a method for future-proofing

You might consider saving money and ditching the water harvesting. That's okay if you live in a place that's likely to receive plenty of rainfall in the future. For many inland places the predictions are the climate will be hotter and drier. Investing in a water harvesting design and implementation will help future-proof your project.

To understand what water harvesting is about check out Brad Landcaster's water harvesting resources.

www.harvestingrainwater.com

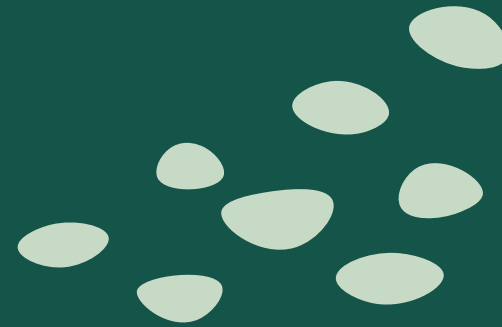
Book a reputable contractor

Water harvesting design and implementation is not widely practiced across Australia.

Start holding conversations with earthworks contractors. Ask for recommendations and visit their projects. Once you are happy and have an agreed price get them pencilled in for a tentative start date for an agreed lump sum. For example, for an earthworks contractor, we might pay \$13,000-\$15,000 to undertake earthworks and implement the water harvesting design. This fee covers insurances, machinery and additional materials for water harvesting trenches (sand and gravel).

STEP 5

Approval



Take a deep breath. This part of the project can take a mega dose of patience and persistence.



Councils by nature are conservative and risk averse. If you were simply planting trees and shrubs they would be less cautious. But you are talking about digging up the ground and creating water harvesting trenches which many of them will never have seen.

- Find out the name and email address of the contact officer you will submit documents to.
- Befriend the contact officer - hopefully they will become your ally
- Get in writing the number of days or weeks approval might take. In the ACT it can take up to 60 days.
- Keep a record of all your conversations and emails with local authorities.
- Submit documents in one package via email.

Now wait.

STEP 6

Earthworks



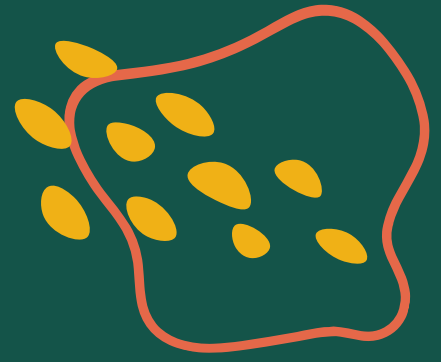
We allow about two weeks for earthworks and about a week for the ground to settle prior to community planting.



- Obtain free Before you Dig documents online
- Engage a Services Locator to locate any infrastructure that could be accidentally dug up
- Install a temporary construction fence, toilet and signage about the project
- Letterbox local residents to know earthworks will be starting shortly
- Landscape Architect to superintend earthworks
- Take photos of progress

STEP 7

Community planting



There's a couple of different ways you can approach the community planting.

You can aim to plant the entire 1500 plants over a long weekend (Friday to Sunday). This is an exhausting but satisfying approach.

Or, schedule planting 500 plants over three planting bees. There's pros and cons with each approach.

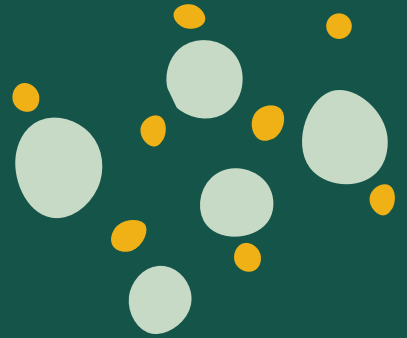


As a rule of thumb, we aim to plant 500 plants per working bee of 2-3 hours with approximately 30 people. Any more than 30 people per session gets hard to manage.

- Decide who will manage the community planting (including plant delivery and hole digging) – will you outsource this job?
- Have you submitted documentation to local authorities regarding community working on public land?
- Ideally, the volunteer leaders main job is to promote these events, participate on the day (including meet and greet) and organise catering

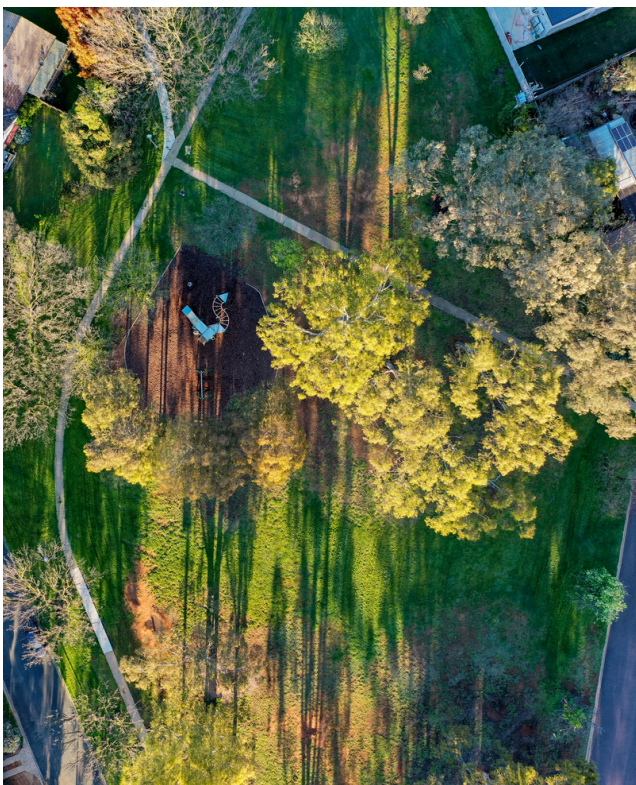
STEP 8

Maintenance



The Miyawaki method of dense planting is reported to be maintenance free within three years.

We commit to local authorities that our volunteer group will maintain the landscape for three years.



- Set a regular time during the growing season for working bees ie 4pm the last Sunday of the month to do a job, like speed weeding. Celebrate after 1 hour.
- Demonstrate good weeding technique (including effective root removal and protecting bodies from injury).
- Buy sturdy tools that can tackle weeding jobs and mulching jobs
- Identify weeds for your group so they know what is a weed and what is not a weed
- Is there a house nearby where you can store equipment – like hoes, rakes etc?
- What will you do with all the weeds you eradicate. Will you compost them on site, take them to a green waste facility or throw them on the grass so the mowing contractors mow over them?



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**MAKE A COMMUNITY
MICROFOREST**

Worksheets

WORKSHEET 1

Starting conversations in your community

Name three people you will have a personal conversation with about starting a community microforest in your neighbourhood over the next 7 days. This exercise is focused on people you currently know in your community. They could be neighbours, friends, local businesses owners or family. Focus on the possibilities not the problems. If you're not sure what to say try opening lines like these.

“Have you heard about the climate-cooling community microforests in Canberra (Downer, Watson, Holt)? Imagine if we could establish one in our suburb.”

In the table below, record who you will contact, when and the outcome of the conversation.

	How will you have the conversation (face to face, on the phone, other)?	When you will have the conversation? (include date and location)	Outcome of the conversation – include if they are willing to form part of a volunteer leadership team. Include email address and phone number
Person 1			
Person 2			
Person 3			

WORKSHEET 2

Starting conversations with the wider community

Hopefully you received some positive responses. Don't worry if you haven't. The next bit is about casting your net wider to the people in your community you don't know.

You can do this via social media or by e-newsletter, for example, through your local community association or school.

Nominate two communication channels you will reach out to and what you will say.

Communication channel	Your message	Notes
Personal Facebook page/Instagram etc	"Are you interested in creating a climate-cooling microforest in your neighbourhood? Local resident, Mary Butters is keen to start a leadership team. Do you want to join up?" Provide links.	Ensure you use good photos to accompany posts. It might be worth posting a picture of a drab/bare park that offers potential for a microforest in your area. Also include a picture of an established microforest. Grab images from the internet.
Other eg Buy Nothing Groups (or groups based on sharing economies)		
The Neighbourhood Association Newsletter/ School Newsletter		

WORKSHEET 3

Hold your first meeting

By now you should have at least three or four people willing to start a volunteer leadership team. People will come and go depending on their commitment and enthusiasm for the project. It's a good idea to keep looking for people to fill gaps in expertise or amount of time available.

Keep your meetings brief (max 1h) and try and make them fun. Start on time and finish on time.

Here's a draft agenda that can keep your meeting on track and also documents the actions the group has decided on. Once filled out Agendas can be saved on Google Drive as a permanent record during the project life.

Agenda

Community Micro-forest – Meeting 1

Date:

Location:

Time	Item	Action
	Introductions – participants briefly introduce themselves (2 minutes each)	
	Provide project background – how the microforest movement started, 8 step process, funding – combination of crowdfunding and grants.	
	Organise a visit to an established community microforests. Find a date that everyone can attend.	
	Organise visits to a number of potential sites in your neighbourhood – use Worksheet 7. Find a date that everyone can attend.	
	Use google maps or www.actmapi.act.gov.au (look for land zoned PRZ1 – urban open space). Best areas are bare areas with little vegetation. This doesn't need to be done during this meeting – allocate task to someone.	
	Create google drive folders to share documents with team members. This doesn't need to be done during this meeting – allocate task to someone.	
	Create a skills register – skills of volunteers	
	Decide how often will you meet and where and when. Refer Worksheet 4	
	Other business	

WORKSHEET 5

Create social media pages

Having a strong social media following is a good way to grow interest in your project. Write down below what the name of your group will be and what your handle is. Link up to the other Microforest Facebook groups.

It's not essential, but you can set up a Website for your group.

Check out

www.watsonmicroforest.com

www.holtmicroforest.com

Facebook	ie Suburb Name_Microforest (make it memorable and keep it short!)
Instagram	
LinkedIn	
Website	
Other	

WORKSHEET 6

Refine your mission

Your overall mission is “to build a climate-cooling microforest of x plants”.

Brainstorm within your leadership team around words and images that describe what else is important to you.

Here’s a list of words you might consider:

microforest

nature play

habitat

water harvesting

community

gathering space

an oasis

bush tucker

contemplative space

pollinator patch

native lawn

climate-ready

insect hotels

dry creek bed

a food forest

You could also create a word cloud and ask people on-line for feedback on what’s important to them. This word list will be refined further during crowdfunding and will be explored during the community consultation sessions in Step 3.

At the end of this worksheet you might come up with a mission statement that reads like this:

“Our mission is to build a climate-cooling microforest of 1000 plants and to incorporate bush tucker plants and a meditation space. “

Write your refined mission statement here

WORKSHEET 7

Gathering site information

Identify at least two to three potential sites. Be flexible in your thinking about each site. Don't choose a site just because it's really close to your home.

Consider how likely is the site to be used by the community – if it's by a busy road or in an area perceived as unsafe it may not get used.

It's important to gather information for the sites you are interested in. One of the first things to do is perform a Before You Dig request. This will show you approximately where services lie. Avoid these services. Note: Before You Dig is a free service and will need to be done twice. Once at the beginning and then prior to Step 6 – Earthworks.

Check with your local authority if a microforest is a suitable land use for the land zone. For example in the ACT – check out www.actmapi.act.gov.au. In the ACT look for land zoned as Public Open Space and outside of the Parliamentary Triangle and areas the City Renewal Authority manage. Also avoid land with special protection ie heritage protection or environmental protection or National Capital Authority Land.

If your group is divided over one site being better than another – score the importance of each element. You may decide that proximity to a school is more important than proximity to local shops.

Name of Site (include Block and Section) number – For example, Wade St Watson park, Block 1 Section 70 WATSON			
Total area (m2)		Close to social housing?	
Before You Dig enquiry		Walking distance to local shops?	
Big open bare space		Surrounded by houses?	
Near a playground?		Near a busy road?	
Walking distance to local schools?			



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Want to learn more?

Find resources, guides and advice at
www.microforestcollective.com.au