



Urban & Community Forestry Success: Oregon's Green Legacy Hiroshima Peace Tree Project

In addition to the environmental benefits tree canopy provides in cities, trees play an important role in bringing communities together for reflection. To mark the 75th anniversary of World War II's end, and with wishes for worldwide peace, people in 30 communities around Oregon planted 45 peace trees in 2019 and 2020. The young ginkgo and Asian persimmons descend from trees that miraculously survived the atom bombing of Hiroshima on Aug. 6, 1945. Today, these trees represent resilience and survival in the wake of a pandemic.

Oregon has one of the largest collections of Hiroshima peace trees of any state or nation outside of Japan.

Hiroshima bombing-survivor and founder of One Sunny Day Initiatives Hideko Tamura-Snider procured the miracle seeds from Green Legacy Hiroshima and called on a local horticultural professional to germinate them. Once the seeds were sprouted, Dr. Tamura-Snider sought the help of Oregon Community Trees and the Oregon Department of Forestry's (ODF) Urban & Community Forestry Assistance program to find homes for them.

ODF arranged for the seedlings to be cared for by Corvallis Parks and Recreation staff and eventually gave them away to Trees Cities USA, Tree Campuses USA, and other communities in Oregon in spring 2020. Despite pandemic restrictions, most of the seedlings were planted in parks, arboretums, and schools. Over 30 cities and towns across 16 Oregon counties received a Hiroshima Peace Tree. Most of these communities are waiting until the pandemic abates to hold the commemorative ceremonies these trees have inspired.



Children pour water on a Hiroshima peace tree planted in Gladstone Nature Park outside Portland, Ore., during the tree's dedication Oct. 3, 2020. Photo by Jim Gersbach, ODF



Hiroshima atom bomb survivor Hideo Tamura-Snider (in yellow poncho) and a local tree official reflect on a ginkgo seedling from her hometown now growing in Talent, Ore., a city devastated by 2020 wildfires. Photo by Jim Gersbach, ODF



Volunteers with the City of La Grande in eastern Oregon pose with the ginkgo peace tree seedling from Hiroshima that they planted in a local city park. Photo by Teresa Gustafson, City of La Grande