Sheet Mulch Method for Preparing your Soil
For any Size Forest Planting Day

This particular 'sheet mulch' method, is our group's best answer for eliminating the sod, and providing a nutrient rich planting surface for your forest in Oregon. This process helps to begin the recreation of the 'living soil' in our new ecosystem. We must re-plant our lost native forests if we are to lessen the impact of warming on the earth's surface.

Three months later, plants and trees are arranged for planting day.

1. Remove non-native shrubs or small trees, as they will interfere with the sun exposure needs of your new plants. Your forest will need root space for their closely intertwining roots underground, which helps to bring life to the underground soil.
2. Large native trees can possibly be designed around the forest in your plan. However our young plants and trees may find it difficult to compete with big mature trees if they are too closely located.
3. Comparison of lists of materials you will need between our sites in Oregon, and ecological landscaper, Basil Camu's text (who is from North Carolina):
    - Cardboard can be used, with all the tape or any non-compostable materials removed, however you need to apply water to this layer, and it may not decompose as quickly as you want in our dry summer months
    - Rolls of brown paper, compostable landscape paper, are purchasable and compost much more easily than cardboard
    - Purchased and composted yard waste that does not contain bark that can dry out too easily
    - Composted yard waste also has a good balance of carbon, nitrogen and minerals, releasing these nutrients more quickly than arborist's wood chips alone
    - Basil Camu adds leaf mold to the instructions in his text, however this is not as easily obtained, and requires an 18 month time to prepare
    - Well composted manure, (best is cow or horse), because this is a part of the original Miyawaki method, and has more nitrogen than the leaf mold that Basil Camu utilizes
    - Wheat straw that is easily available here, (we use because it is light and easy to apply, has a high carbon nutrient, and as a surface mulch keeps heat out of the soil and moisture in, blocking light, and keeping the forest free of weeds)

- In his text, Basil Camu utilizes the term arborist's wood chips, and if you want to use this material, we can clarify that to encourage the use of: any 'free chip drop' in the Pacific Northwest, (but do NOT use 'garden center wood chips', which do not enrich the soil effectively, or decompose well for this purpose)
- 'Free chip drops', as most people are aware: are not entirely reliable to align with your desired 'planting day', the volume you need, and the exact location of the 'drop', so you might want to plan ahead
- Added arborist's chips, or cedar chips: can also be useful for designing a path in order to remove weeds inside the forest for the first 3-4 years, and looking ahead to the design of permanent paths in order to walk, or sit inside the forest ?
- A small fence, that may be slightly rustic/native looking is required to keep animals or young children out of the forest for the first 3 years at least
- If you are located in a more rural area with deer, you may be required to have a tall deer fence
- A straw wattle measured to circumferences of entire sections of the forest, is needed only if you are located on a slope, or might have any erosion of the added mulches

Work Order: in early summer for fall planting (best choice), or late fall for early spring planting (alternate choice)

1. Cover prepared ground with your choice of cardboard or 2 layers of brown compostable landscape paper, so that no light can come through.
2. Surround the planting areas with a 6 inch straw wattle, to contain the mulches you are about to apply if needed.
3. Composted manure is applied FIRST in a 2-3 inch layer over the cardboard (after watering), or paper.

Choosing Between Using Composted Yard Waste or Arborist's Wood Chips on the Top Layer, While Awaiting your Planting Day

- Some groups prefer using composted yard waste, because it is easier for volunteers to plant into than arborist's chips.
- However if you use composted yard waste on the top layer, you will need to add an additional layer of wheat straw right after planting all your plants, which can be an advantage if you like adding a layer later
- In the case of using arborist's chips, these chips become your insulating layer, and weed control layer instead of the wheat straw, and their nutrient levels if you do not use composted manure are sufficient, and have some extended affect.

- Whereas the wheat straw is easy to apply as your insulating layer after planting, you can reapply this as needed, and the wheat straw is an effective way to retain water, and maintain weed control

4. So now you have chosen either composted yard waste, or arborist's chips for your top layer. You then apply this second layer, 3-4 inches thick, over the composted manure. In either case your total of 5-7 inches of compost/mulch has been applied. You may find that some advisors recommend more of these amendments, however these measurements are sufficient for keeping light from the grass sod, as well as providing the nutrients you will need for your native trees and plants.
5. Water your site well enough occasionally, and check to see that your paper or cardboard is composting well.
6. Let the site rest for a minimum of 3 months before planting day.

- **A volume calculator: for ordering large amounts of composted manure, composted yard waste, or arborist's chips is located (Here). You will need to know how many square yards of surface area you are planting, or your calculation needs for making paths.**

This small 2 year old Miyawaki/pocket forest, located in Gresham, Oregon already has trees that tower over you. It is a perfect size for a backyard, or small outdoor classroom for a local school. The forest has a circumference of 41 ft, a diameter of 13 ft, and a total area of 133 sq ft.. Some of our local native plant nursery prices can be as low as $3.00 per container, or in this case $59-$75 for all the plants and trees in the forest. Well composted manure can sometimes be located for free, and arborist's wood chips can be signed up for ahead of time, as a 'chip drop'. The shape of the forest can also be adapted creatively to your site.