POCKET FOREST PRINCIPLES

Pocket forests are created when native trees and shrubs are planted in dense groupings, with no grass underneath. They sequester carbon faster, increase biodiversity, lower temperatures, require less maintenance, and absorb more stormwater than trees planted solo, surrounded by grass. But what if you are only planting a few trees and/or shrubs? You can still use Pocket Forest Principles, even for "mini-pockets"!

In my area, which plants are native, which are "keystone," and where can I get them them?

How?

LESS GRASS: Plant trees and shrubs in close groupings so you can replace the grass between them with mulch, native flowers or native groundcover. Turf grass is a food desert for pollinators!

DIVERSITY RULES:
Native trees and shrubs of different heights form dense shade, keeping moisture in and weeds down. And plantings that contain a variety of species are more resilient in the face of drought, invasive pests and disease.

CELEBRATE THE HOLES: When insects "find your forest" and eat your leaves, that's a good sign: Insects are bird food and pollinators--they're critical to healthy ecosystems!

NATIVES ONLY: Native species are more resilient, and are the essential source of food and shelter for insects, birds, and wildlife. "Keystone species" are especially key! Without them, food chains collapse and species disappear.

TLC IN THE BEGINNING: Protect from hungry mice, rabbits, and deer. Mulch generously (wood chips, straw, leaves, etc.), but avoid mounding around trunks. For the first 2-3 years, make sure they get a good soaking each week.

LEAVE THE LEAVES: Butterflies and moths complete their life cycle in leaf litter under trees, and beneficial insects like fireflies, bumble bees, beetles, and lacewings need the shelter provided by leaves to survive. No raking, less work!

ONE MORE THING: Weed whip damage is a very common cause of tree decline and death. If you can't plant in groupings and ditch the grass underneath, at least apply trunk protectors to those stand-alone trees. Your trees will thank you!

FOR MORE INFO, GO TO
POCKETFORESTS.ORG