



Green Legacy Trees in Oberlin Guidebook



A-bombed Trees



The atomic bomb survivor trees know the dangers of weapons of mass destruction—nuclear weapons in particular—but they also reflect the resilience of nature. Green Legacy Hiroshima has partners in 40 countries and works to grow these trees as part of a long-term (1,000-year) campaign, joining other efforts for a nuclear-free and more sustainable planet.

Green Legacy Hiroshima

The Green Legacy trees in Oberlin grew from the seeds of a-bomb survivor trees (hibaku jumoku 被爆樹木 in Japanese). We invite you to learn the stories of these trees.

Trees were among the living things destroyed by atomic bombs in Hiroshima and Nagasaki during World War II. Despite the immense damage, some trees came back to life and contributed to the restoration of habitable cities.

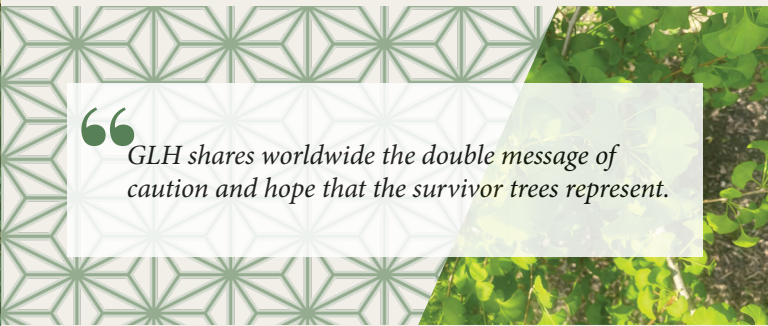
While people understand the significance of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki atomic bombings in different ways, the first uses of nuclear weapons in war in August 1945 mark the start of the nuclear age. Green Legacy promotes knowledge about nuclear weapons, which cause severe environmental damage, undermine national and global security, and divert vast public resources from social needs.

Please come out and meet these witness trees—flora that remain long after the historical events they experienced—and learn and share their stories.

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GLH shares worldwide the double message of caution and hope that the survivor trees represent.



Green Legacy in Oberlin

The two ginkgo trees on Tappan Square are descendants of a tree in Shukkeien Garden, Hiroshima. The parent tree is one of 159 trees of multiple plant species within a two-kilometer radius of the atomic bomb blast that survived. Can you find the ginkgo trees on Tappan Square? Take a walk near the Memorial Arch and across from King Building!



Ginkgo biloba (mother tree), Shukkeien Garden, Hiroshima, Japan.

被爆樹木—イチョウの木、広島市縮景園



Ginkgo biloba (descendent), Oberlin, Ohio USA, Donated in 2015 ; planted 2017.

被爆樹木—イチョウの木、米国オハイオ州オバリン市
2015年寄贈 | 2017年植樹



Many atomic bomb survivors sought refuge in the garden, though many did not survive. Despite the damage from heat, blast, and radiation, the tree grew back and continues to thrive, producing golden leaves and seeds in the fall as a symbol of resilience and life.

Community Connections

This wisteria survived the atomic bombing less than one mile from the hypocenter and currently grows at Senda Elementary School, which lost 41 children in the bombing. The wisteria, with its curving vines and purple flowers, has been part of the lives and learning of many generations of the school's students. Residents and staff at Kendal at Oberlin welcomed the wisteria descendant to the John Bartram Arboretum.



Parent wisteria in Hiroshima.
Photo credit: Sophie Qano



Wisteria (Fuji, descendant), Kendal at Oberlin, USA.
Photo credit: John Elder



Tappan as a Place

Located at the center of Oberlin College, Tappan Square is a 13-acre park open to the public. The Green Legacy ginkgo trees establish their roots here amidst many layers of green history. Into the early 19th century, native peoples may have known this area as swampy, wooded land. When settlers arrived in 1833, they stopped at the “historic elm” tree and decided to build a school and community around it. In the early 20th century, college buildings were cleared from the square to make way for a landscaped village green.

Tappan Square is a National Historic Landmark and a meeting place at the heart of the community.

Explore the square and meet the Green Legacy trees and their neighbors. The ginkgo trees are near the Memorial Arch and across from the King Building.

Take a walk in Tappan Square and observe the life around you. How many kinds of leaf shapes can you identify? Which is your favorite? Dress warmly in the winter and venture out—how many colors and textures of tree bark can you discover? How do they feel? On warm days, how does the green smell and feel? What other creatures live and travel around Tappan?

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Look up, look around, check the sky, and the ground.



Green Legacy's Vision

Green Legacy Hiroshima's mission is to safeguard and spread worldwide the seeds and saplings of Hiroshima's atomic bomb survivor trees. Green Legacy Hiroshima (GLH) is a global initiative founded by Watanabe Tomoko and Nassrine Azimi in 2011. Green Legacy volunteers in Hiroshima gather seeds from the *hibaku jumoku* and prepare them for sharing with institutional partners around the world. When Ms. Watanabe brought ginkgo and wisteria seeds to Oberlin in 2015, the Oberlin community committed to planting and nurturing these second-generation survivor trees. GLH currently has 146 partners in more than 40 countries.

Watanabe Tomoko is an author and co-founder of Green Legacy Hiroshima (GLH) and ANT (Asian Network of Trust)-Hiroshima, an organization dedicated to international cooperation, peacebuilding, and peace education around the world. The daughter of atomic bomb survivors, Ms. Watanabe brought GLH seeds to Oberlin at the invitation of Oberlin journalist Diana Roose.



Watanabe Tomoko walks in Tappan Square in 2015.
Photo credit: Walter Novak



Nassrine Azimi, cofounder of Green Legacy Hiroshima. Writer, teacher, first director of the Hiroshima office of U.N. Institute for Training and Research.



Learn more about *Hibaku Jumoku*

What is the hypocenter?

The hypocenter (爆心地) is the point on Earth's surface directly beneath the center of a nuclear bomb's explosion. Today's thermonuclear weapons are a thousand times more destructive than the atomic bombs.



Why do the *hibaku jumoku* lean toward the hypocenter?

Some trees were almost blown over by the bomb blast and have grown asymmetrically ever since. The side of the trees facing the hypocenter may have suffered cellular damage, resulting in delayed growth on that side. Some trees have fewer roots on the side facing the hypocenter.



What does damage to the bark and trunk tell us?

Some trees that survived the atomic bomb on August 6, 1945, were scarred by the extreme heat and blast of the explosion. You may see places where trees have healed around their wounds—whether from the atomic bomb, air pollution, or other human activities.



What about the humans who survived the atomic bombings?

The survivor trees inspired many *hibakusha* (human survivors, 被爆者). Survivors such as Numata Suzuko, Setsuko Thurlow, and many others reflect on lessons learned from war and dedicate themselves to working toward a more equitable and peaceful Earth, free of nuclear weapons.



Let's do a health check up for the trees!

Even when damaged by war, trees always make the choice to live. Sometimes, trees need help to recover from damage. We invite you to help monitor the trees' condition and support their health. Use this health checkup chart to evaluate the trees' condition—and try it with trees close to home, too! Courtesy of Horiguchi Chikara.

How to find hibaku jumoku (被爆樹木) in Hiroshima:

Look for plaques on the trees. The green-greetings.com website offers a downloadable tree tour app and information about the health checkup.



Horiguchi Chikara, an arborist (樹木医), has cared for the hibaku jumoku with the city of Hiroshima for more than 30 years.

Scan to learn more
and download
the tree tour app



<https://green-greetings.com/en/meguri/>



Green Legacy Tree Health Checkup 被曝樹木カルテ

Walk around, touch, and observe the tree carefully. Use the chart below to record your observations. Does the tree appear healthy? Calculate its health score and submit your results to us!

TREE INFORMATION

Common name &
scientific name

Height

Circumference
(measured 3–6 feet from ground)

Distance from hypocenter

meters

Location

- ☐ Park ☐ Near a street
☐ Surrounded by buildings
☐ Other: _____

CATEGORY

4

3

2

1

SCORE

Trunk

Smooth and
even

Some bumps
and swells

Big bumps
and hollows

Mostly hollow

Small branches
& leaves

Many
small, living
branches

Some small
branches

Few small
branches

None or
almost none

Distribution of
branches

Branches
distributed
evenly

Somewhat
uneven
distribution

Very uneven
distribution

Branches only
in one place

Dead branches

No dead
branches

Some dead
branches

Dead
branches on
top and lower
areas

All branches
dead

Bark

No scars and
looks healthy

Some scars,
but bark has
enveloped the
scars

Extensive
damage

Bark is all
cracked and
peeling off

Suckers
(new growth
from base or
roots)

No suckers

A few

Many suckers

All upper
branches
dead; only
suckers
remain

Total:

Green Legacy Tree Surroundings Health Checkup

CATEGORY	HEALTH SCORE				SCORE
	4	3	2	1	
Air	Very clean	Fairly clean	A little polluted	Heavy exhaust from roads	
Space for branches	Enough space for branches to grow	A little close to other trees	Surrounded by nearby buildings and trees	Other trees and buildings completely cover the tree	
Ground above roots	Not accessible to pedestrians	Some access to pedestrians	Occasional foot and car traffic	Frequent foot and car traffic	
Quality of the soil	Soft, with fallen leaves	Soil is compacted and hard	Graveled	Paved with asphalt	
Exposure to sunlight	Good	A little shaded	Heavy shade	No sunlight at all	
				Total:	

- If moss grows on trees, it indicates that the area is fairly humid.
- If mushrooms grow on living trees, it may be a sign that the tree is or was unhealthy.

TREE HEALTH CHECKUP TOTAL SCORE

21–24	Very healthy
14–20	Moderately healthy
7–13	Showing signs of decline
1–6	Unhealthy—consider consulting an arborist

TREE SURROUNDINGS TOTAL SCORE

20	Excellent environment for healthy tree growth
14–19	Generally good, but conditions may still affect tree health
7–13	Poor environment for tree health
1–6	Very poor environment – trees are at risk

How was your experience?

Please take some photos of the trees along the way. Please report trees that need attention to greenlegacy@unitar.org.

Join the Green Legacy initiative

Oberlin College and the community foster our connection to *hibaku jumoku* and Green Legacy through tree tours on Tappan Square that share the history of second-generation trees; *kamishibai* storytelling; study and research trips to Hiroshima; and collaboration with community partners such as Kendal at Oberlin and Oberlin Shansi. We invite you to participate in these opportunities or to organize your own peacebuilding efforts as a steward of the Green Legacy trees.



Read about the benefits of trees to the Earth and to people. Learn more about Green Legacy Hiroshima at <https://glh.unitar.org>.

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