

Foragers' Forest

Annotated Budget

Site Prep

Materials & labor required to prepare the site for planting

Turfgrass sod removal	\$\$\$	<p>Required sod cutter & sod disposal. Very costly & labor intensive approach to turfgrass removal. Contracted to landscape company.</p> <p><i>Other approaches include herbicide, solarization & cardboard/mulch method, but these require advance planning.</i></p>
Soil tilling	\$\$\$	<p>Tilling to break up surface compaction was unevenly completed due to rocky soil. Contracted to landscape company.</p> <p><i>On highly compacted sites, consider methods that break up deep compaction, such as deep tine ripping or soil profile rebuilding.</i></p>
Compost amendment	\$\$\$	<p>Added 1-inch layer of compost to increase soil organic matter. Contracted to landscape company.</p> <p><i>Quantity is estimated based on area to be covered & inches depth. Look for 'cured' compost with reduced risk of containing weed seeds.</i></p>
Site mulching	\$\$\$	<p>Added 4-inch layer of pine bark chips to tree/shrub clusters & walking trail. Contracted to landscape</p>

		<p>company.</p> <p><i>Quantity is estimated based on area to be covered & inches depth. If soils are overly basic, pine bark & pine needles can help acidify the soil as they decompose.</i></p>
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Planting	\$\$\$	<p>Most of the plants were installed by a landscape company during the initial planting.</p> <p><i>Consider working with volunteers during planting, both for cost savings & community engagement.</i></p>
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Plants

Plant options include pots, plugs, live stakes & seed mixes

Trees & shrubs	\$\$\$	<p>Installed a mix of smaller and larger trees (1, 3, and 5-gallon pots). Est. \$15-30 per tree/shrub.</p> <p><i>Larger trees grow out of deer browse height faster; however, smaller trees are more adaptable to site conditions. Free & low-cost trees are available from Fairfax ReLeaf & local Soil & Water Conservation Districts.</i></p>
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Meadow plants	\$\$\$	<p>Installed plugs & quart-sized plants to fill in the meadow. Est. \$1-2 per plug and \$6-12 per pot.</p> <p><i>Seed mixes are a much cheaper approach for developing a meadow, but require the right timing & soil preparation.</i></p>
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Miscellaneous

Plant labels	\$	Weatherproof metal plant labels. Cheap & effective approach for labeling plants.
Labelmaker/tape	\$\$	Wi-fi enabled label maker and label tape. Cheap & effective approach for labeling plants.
Benches	\$\$\$	(2) university-approved backed benches, concrete pad & installation.
Interpretive signage	\$\$\$	(2) university-approved panel signs with educational information about the Foragers' Forest.

Maintenance

Materials & labor required to establish & maintain the site

Tools	\$\$	Tools we used for design, planting & maintenance: pruners, spades, shovels, rakes, gardening gloves, trash bags, landscape flags, heavy mallet, hori hori knife & wheelbarrows.
Soil acidifier	\$	Applied Espoma soil acidifier around acid-loving plants.
Compost	\$\$	Applied compost to cover bare soil in the meadow & prevent weed seed germination. Compost delivered in bulk & applied by volunteers. <i>Search for compost options with reduced risk of containing weed seeds.</i>

Tree protection from deer	\$\$\$	<p><i>For one tree: (1) A.M. Leonard 48-inch, black mesh tree protector, (1) 6-ft wooden stake, (3) zip ties. Est. \$10-15/tree. Also need heavy mallet, step stool & clippers for installation.</i></p> <p><i>Fencing clusters of trees/shrubs with welded wire fencing and metal t-posts can substantially reduce deer protection costs.</i></p>
Shrub protection from deer	\$\$	<p><i>For one shrub: approx. 6 feet of 48-inch high welded wire fencing, (2) 5-ft hardwood stakes, (8) zip ties. Est. \$10-15/shrub. Also need heavy mallet, step stool & wire cutters for installation.</i></p> <p><i>Fencing clusters of trees/shrubs with welded wire fencing and metal t-posts can substantially reduce deer protection costs.</i></p>
Watering	labor	<p>Requires filling & transporting watering cans to the groves. <i>Finding a site with access to an outdoor water faucet would be ideal for irrigating during plant establishment.</i></p>
Weeding	labor	<p>Requires one person to spend 2-3 hours per week weeding through the growing season to ensure minimal cover by invasives and undesirable weeds. Most important during establishment in first 1-3 years.</p>

\$ = 1-100 \$\$ = 101-1000 \$\$\$ = 1000+

Based on a 5,200 square-ft food forest on George Mason University campus. Planted approx. 150 native trees & shrubs, and approx. 1,700 native grasses & forbs.