



## Beyond the Basics – Part 1

### Forests are more than groups of trees

Groups of planted trees might look like a forest, but they're not. When soil erodes from a hillside, it takes with it all the plants, seeds, insects and micro-organisms that are in the top layer of soil. These are vital to the development of a healthy, diverse forest.

Here's just one way to correct the situation.

After about 30 years, the groups of young planted trees are old enough to shade the ground and keep conditions cool and moist enough for the forest floor species to live. It's now time to focus on planting forest shrubs and wildflowers in these areas. These in turn will attract the many insect communities that will help healthy forest soil to develop.

Shrubs and wildflowers can be planted individually from purchased stock. They can also be carefully gathered by cutting small mats from healthy forests. The mats are then placed under older groups of planted trees. In time, plants in the mats will spread. This can't be done everywhere due to cost and availability of material. But with enough small diverse pockets over the landscape the recovery of forest floor vegetation should be faster than leaving nature to do the job alone.



Transplanted forest floor mats in an otherwise bare tree plantation