

## Building a future forest

### Tree-planting marks the start of the Company Forest in Kihoku



(Left) Commemorative photograph showing smiles all around.  
(Top Right) Good will expressed on message boards for the seedlings.  
(Bottom Right) Planting each tree carefully, dreaming of a future forest.

In the southern area of Mie Prefecture lies Kihoku Town, where the creation of a “future forest” is proceeding as part of MHI’s CSR activities. In November 2009, Mie Prefecture, Kihoku Town and MHI’s Air-Conditioning & Refrigeration Systems Headquarters joined forces and created the Kihoku Company Forest of broadleaf trees on the sloping land of the mountains overlooking Kumanonada.

Even large forests first start from one seedling. The Forest Creation Committee, made up of company volunteers from the Headquarters’ Biwajima Plant in Aichi Prefecture and Matsusaka Plant in Mie Prefecture planted the trees with guidance and cooperation from Kihoku Town and Forestry Association Owase. Roughly 200 people participated, including company volunteers and their families, and nearby local residents.

The forest was started with hoes in hands, digging holes in the slopes in which to plant each of the 900 broadleaf tree seedlings of 14 different varieties such as Mountain Cherry, Konara Oak, Japanese Maple, Hornbeam and Japanese Evergreen Oak. The sweat on everyone’s brows brought with it a sense of enjoyment. Many of the children participating could be seen getting totally caught up in their tasks as they worked alongside their parents.

Participants expressed their delight at the taste this fresh experience brought them, observing how good it felt to plant their own trees at such a scenic location while looking out over the ocean, as well as how the stress of everyday life disappeared as they concentrated on swinging hoes and digging holes. The planted seedlings were provided with message boards, upon which were written names and

desires. Some people wrote their family’s name, to link the growth of the trees with that of their family; others wrote various messages wishing for big Kihoku trees and their own health.

But the fun did not stop with the tree-planting. On a trip to beautiful Wagu Beach, everybody enjoyed a delicious lunch of a local fisherman’s dish featuring Mie Prefecture’s elusive sevenband grouper. Locals and visitors intermingled, and a meaningful time was had by all.

To date the General Machinery & Special Vehicle Headquarters has been involved with the Kanagawa Water Source Forest Creation Project, as has the Kobe Shipyard & Machinery Works with the Kobe Onaza Forest Creation Project. Meanwhile, a variety of activity is underway, with departments in the Mihara area in Hiroshima Prefecture having participated in prefectural activities for preserving forestlands, and even MHI Head Office participating in the growing seedlings for Tokyo’s *Umi-no-mori* (Sea Forest).

It has been a year since the trees at Kihoku were planted, a year in which the seedlings have been growing rapidly. MHI will continue environmental preservation activities, and looks forward to the seedlings seeing the well-wishes for the future on their message boards someday come true.

Enjoying the famous local fisherman’s dishes and the view of Kumanonada, any tiredness is immediately forgotten.

