

Wangari Maathai



"It's the little things citizens do. That's what will make the difference. My little thing is planting trees."

The Kenyans called her 'Mama Miti' (mother of trees). She was born in a rural village in the highlands of Kenya in 1940. When Wangari was growing up, the forest was thick and full of animals and the water was clean. The soil was fertile and people could grow their own crops. Over the years, the forest was cut down and the soil overworked because of commercial farming. The streams were polluted and the communities were getting poorer and poorer. Something had to be done...

On world environment day 1st 1977, Wangari and a small group of women planted 7 trees in Nairobi to mark the first green belt. People laughed at first, but the villagers taught the other villagers how to plant trees. Slowly, Wangari's Green Belt Movement spread from village to village, country to country, and it grew, from a tiny seed of an idea into something big...

In 2004 she was awarded the Nobel peace prize and was the first African woman to get it.

Sadly, she died of ovarian cancer on the 25th of september 2011

Fun Fact: Wangari died 1 day before I was born!

