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Press release

## **From the Hibakusha (Nobel Peace Prize winners) to the Hibakujumoku: PEFC also brings peace trees that survived the atomic bombs in Hiroshima to Italy**

- *On 10 December, the Nobel Peace Prize will be awarded to the Japanese organisation **Nihon Hidankyo** composed of the **Hibakusha**, the survivors of the atomic bombs dropped on **Hiroshima** and **Nagasaki**.*
- *Carrying on their message will also be **the Hibakujumoku**, the trees that survived the bombings, all over the world. In Italy, **PEFC Italy** and **the 'World without Wars and Violence' Association** promote awareness and reflection on the consequences of nuclear weapons and emphasise the importance of the relationship between nature and humanity by growing and distributing Hibakujumoku.*
- *To date, **49 'peace trees' have been planted**, entrusted to associations, schools and institutions engaged in projects for the environment and social inclusion.*

For its efforts in keeping alive the testimony of those who have endured the terrible reality of nuclear weapons and the commitment promulgated over time to rid the world of this threat, the Japanese organisation **Nihon Hidankyo** composed of the **Hibakusha**, the survivors of the atomic bombs dropped on the cities of **Hiroshima** and **Nagasaki** in August 1945, is awarded the **Nobel Peace Prize 2024**<sup>1</sup>. The award, which will be presented at the award ceremony **on 10 December in Oslo**, underlines the importance of the historical testimony of the Hibakusha, who were able to transform their painful experience into **widespread educational campaigns** to oppose nuclear weapons worldwide. As time goes by, however, the Hibakusha will no longer be present to tell their story directly. If in Japan, the younger generation is already picking up the baton, in the rest of the world, the **trees**, or rather: the **Hibakujumoku**, will be able to take on this role.

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<sup>1</sup><https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/peace/2024/press-release/>

This is explained by **PEFC Italy**, an organisation that promotes the correct and sustainable management of the forest heritage, which every year undertakes to spread the message of peace and hope against nuclear weapons **by distributing Hibakujumoku plants.**

The Japanese term - composed of **hibaku** (被爆) meaning 'bombarded, exposed to nuclear radiation', and **jumoku** (樹木) meaning 'tree' or 'forest' - was coined to refer to a **tree that was exposed to the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and either survived or regrown from the same roots.**

Hibakujumoku are therefore **unique trees**, symbols of hope and resilience, **grown on the ground within a 2 km radius of the epicentre of the nuclear explosion.** There are more **than 160** trees, classified in **more than 30 species**, officially registered as **hibakujumoku** and identified by a unique marker, from which seeds are collected that will give life to **new seedlings** entrusted around the world.

The idea was born in 2011 with the foundation of [Green Legacy Hiroshima](#) (GLH), a voluntary organisation that plays a key role in the global distribution of Hibakujumoku seeds, promoting awareness and reflection on the consequences of nuclear weapons and the importance of the relationship between nature and humanity. **Since 2020, PEFC Italy and the Association "World without Wars and without Violence-Nonviolent Biodiversity"**, active in about 30 countries carrying out grassroots social activities and developing international campaigns such as *2000 without war*, *Education for Nonviolence* and *The World March for Peace and Nonviolence*, which is now in its third edition and will end on 5 January 2025, have been proposing the Hibakujumoku as "**Peace Trees**". In collaboration with the **Centro di Ateneo per i Musei Scientifici of the University of Perugia**, the two associations take care of the collection of seeds from the mother plants in Hiroshima - which are germinated and then grown at the botanical garden in Perugia - and the requests for the fostering of these young trees developed in Italy.

Every year, **around 10 trees born from the seeds of the Hibakujumoku** are distributed by PEFC Italy and 'World without Wars and Violence', entrusted to the care of organisations, schools and institutions that have distinguished themselves through projects and activities in favour of peace, the environment and social inclusion.

*"These trees, silent witnesses of a tragedy that indelibly marks the path of humanity, carry messages that are more necessary today than ever, especially considering the dramatic conflicts currently taking place in the world. The Hibakujumoku are a living warning against war and the use of weapons of mass destruction, but also a firm demonstration of the strength and capacity for rebirth inherent in nature,"* commented **Antonio Brunori**, Secretary General of PEFC Italy. *"Through the memory of the Hibakusha and the symbolic survival of the Hibakujumoku, the world continues to learn the lessons of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, working towards a future without nuclear weapons and full of hope".*

*"We build Peace," Marco Bussone, PEFC President, points out, "also with a new approach to ecosystems, stopping deforestation and illegal exploitation of forest areas, generating new links, in Italy, between those who produce and those who consume natural public goods. Pathways that intertwine Human Capital and Natural Capital in a new way".*

### **Hibakujumoku in Italy**

To date, **49 Hibakujumoku trees** have been entrusted in Italy, from north to south.

**Before 2020**, trees were planted in Venegono Superiore (VA), Fiumicello Villa Vicentina (UD), Livorno, Foggia, Brindisi, Reggio Calabria, Palermo and Narni (TR). In **2020**, Hibakujumoku were handed over to the Kilometro Verde in Parma and to the San Matteo degli Armeni Library in Perugia. As many as 13 trees will be entrusted in **2021**: to Carrega Ligure for the Appennino Futuro Remoto project; to the Leonardo da Vinci Secondary School in Maccagno (VA); to the San Salvatore Primary School in Rimini; to the Bosco Spaggiari in Parma; to the Parco della Pace in Vicenza; to the Pro Ponte association in Perugia Ponte San Giovanni; to the Municipality of Pesaro and to the Nuova Acropoli association in Bologna. In addition, through the collaboration with the Planet association, they were distributed to the University of Calabria in Arcavacata (CS), the Mediterranean University of Reggio Calabria, the Magna Grecia University of Catanzaro and the University of Basilicata in Potenza; the Botanical Garden of Perugia.

Other Hibakujumoku were awarded to deserving projects in **2022**: to the CONAF (National Council of Agronomists and Foresters) with planting at the San Sisto Nurseries in Rome; to the Primary School of Collevale (PG); to the Bolzaneto Municipality of Genoa; to the 'U. Calavrese' of Taranto Talsano; to the Liceo Statale Enrico Medi of Villafranca di Verona (VR); to the Mycological Association Bresadola of Agrate Brianza (MZ); to the municipal administration of San Vendemiano (TV); to the Zen Centre Anshin Buddhist Temple of Rome; to the CANALETE Cooperative of Trissino (VI) and the municipal administration of Cartosio (AL); to the Ferrara administration, again with the collaboration of the Plant for Planet project.

In **2023**, the 'Peace Trees' were entrusted to the Nocetum Centre and to the IC Madre Teresa di Calcutta in Milan; to the CREA Foresta-Legno research centre in Arezzo; to the municipal administration of San Giorgio Bigarello (MN); to the Mon amour association in Turin and to the ANPI in Modena; to the Cini Foundation in Venice (San Giorgio Island). Lastly, a further **6 trees** were delivered in 2024: to the municipal administration of Arignano (TO), to the Nuova Acropoli Association of Verona, to the Associazione Cittadini per la Memoria del Vajont/Comitato Noi, 9 Ottobre, to the Librarti Association of Casale Monferrato (AL), to the Casa dei Bambini 'A.C.Piccoli' Montessori of Vicenza and to the Istituto Comprensivo G. Pucciano of Bisignano (CS).

You can apply for a Hibakujumoku, and help spread the message of peace carried by Hibakusha, by contacting the address [alberipacehiroshima@gmail.com](mailto:alberipacehiroshima@gmail.com). Each plant has a story to tell, teaching that nature has the ability to regenerate itself even after such devastating tragedies.

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**PEFC Italy** is a non-profit association that is the national governing body of the PEFC (Programme for Endorsement of Forest Certification schemes) certification system. PEFC is an international initiative based on a broad understanding of stakeholders in the implementation of sustainable forest management at national and regional level. Participating in the development of PEFC are representatives of forest and poplar owners, environmental organisations, end-consumers, users, freelancers, research, the timber industry and craftsmen. One of its objectives is to improve the image of forestry and the forest-wood-paper supply chain by providing a market instrument for marketing wood, paper and forest products from sustainably managed forests and plantations.

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