

February 14, 2019

Mitsui Chemicals Group Donates NONROT™-Treated Benches Made from Non-Native Bishop Wood to Ogasawara Islands

Second round of the Protecting Our World Natural Heritage Project
- Supporting Ogasawara Islands' endemic *Morus boninensis* regeneration project -

In the second round of the Mitsui Chemicals Group's Protecting Our World Natural Heritage Project series, Mitsui Chemicals, Inc. (President & CEO: Tsutomu Tannowa) and Mitsui Chemicals Industrial Products Ltd. (President: Shu Saito) have been supporting a project focused on bringing back the endemic species *Morus boninensis* to the Ogasawara Islands. As part of this endeavor, the companies donated benches made from felled bishop wood (*Bischofia javanica*), a non-native species, to Ogasawara Village (Mayor: Kazuo Morishita) at a *Morus boninensis* planting event held on December 9, 2018 (event video: <https://youtu.be/yLifHXKXpJU>).



With the participation of villagers, the municipality has been carrying out a project aimed at replanting the endemic *Morus boninensis* that once accounted for a large proportion of the woodlands of the Ogasawara Islands. It is one of a number of projects launched in 2018 to mark the 50th anniversary of the islands' return to Japanese control. *Morus boninensis* was highly prized as a source of timber, leading to uncontrolled felling early in the islands' development. Coupled with encroachment by bishop wood, this has resulted in the *Morus boninensis* population being reduced to just 100 trees throughout the archipelago today. The endemic species has therefore been designated as endangered on the Ministry of the Environment's Red List. To support the replanting project, which is focused on Ogasawara Village's next 50 years, Mitsui Chemicals and Mitsui Chemicals Industrial Products turned felled bishop wood into benches and signs for the "*Morus boninensis* forest" on Chichijima Island and the "forest on Hahajima Island". The benches and signs are treated with NONROT™, a wood protective coating supplied by Mitsui Chemicals Industrial Products that lets the wood breathe, allowing the scent of the timber itself to emerge.

■ **Morus Boninensis Planting Event** (December 9, 2018; held on Chichijima Island by Ogasawara Village)

Morus boninensis was once a major component of the Ogasawara Islands' woodlands, but it is said that only 100 or so of the trees remain today. The Forestry and Forest Products Research Institute used its cloning technology to produce *Morus boninensis* seedlings, which were then transferred to Ogasawara Village to become accustomed to the local climate and soil before being planted with the aid of about 90 people on December 9, 2018.



Items donated: Two bishop wood benches (*Morus boninensis* forest, Chichijima Island), two bishop wood signs (*Morus boninensis* forest, Chichijima Island; forest on Hahajima Island), and NONROT™ coating (in Clear and Holy White)

■ **NONROT™ Wood Protective Coating**

NONROT™ is a highly safe timber coating that makes full use of wood's natural breathability to guard against exposure to the elements and humidity. It offers outstanding water-repellency, UV resistance and protection against rot, fungus and insects. As NONROT™ allows the wood to breathe, users of products treated with the coating can still enjoy the pleasant scent of the timber itself.



(Reference)

- Protecting Our World Natural Heritage Project in Yakushima
<https://www.mitsuichem.com/en/release/2017/170316.htm>
- Marine Litter Cleanup on World Natural Heritage Site Ogasawara Islands
https://www.mitsuichem.com/en/release/2019/2019_0111.htm