



# TOKYO

## Green Mapmaking in Japan's Capital

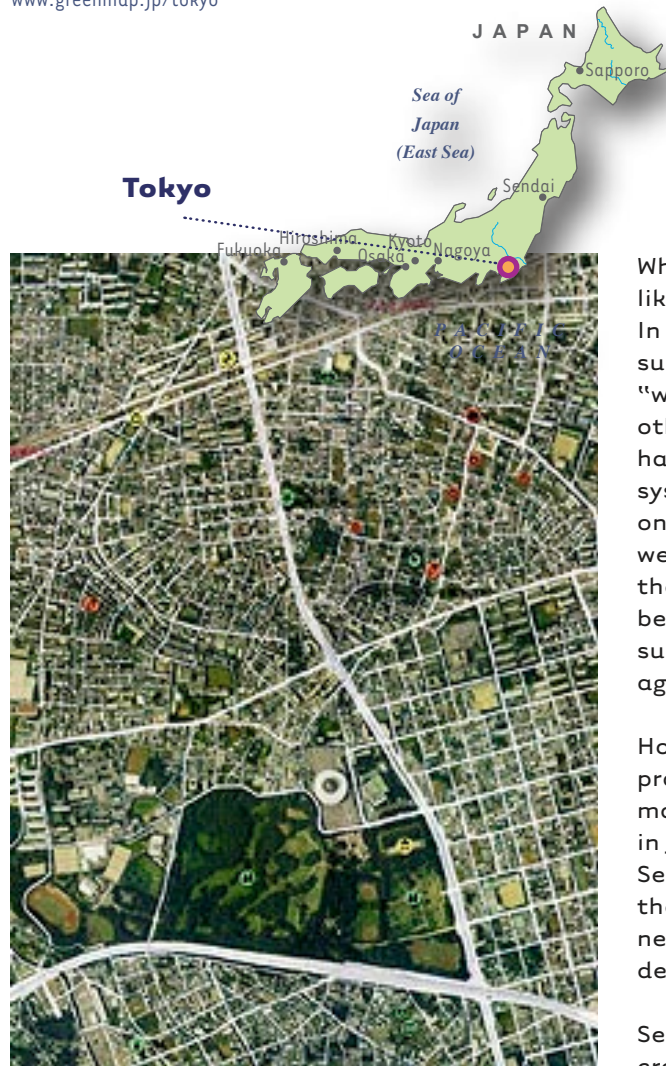


A project of the **Green Map System**:  
promoting sustainability and citizen  
action in communities around the world  
through locally created maps of the  
natural and cultural environment



# Introduction

Setagaya Ward · Tokyo · Japan  
Tokyo Green Maps  
[www.greenmap.jp/tokyo](http://www.greenmap.jp/tokyo)

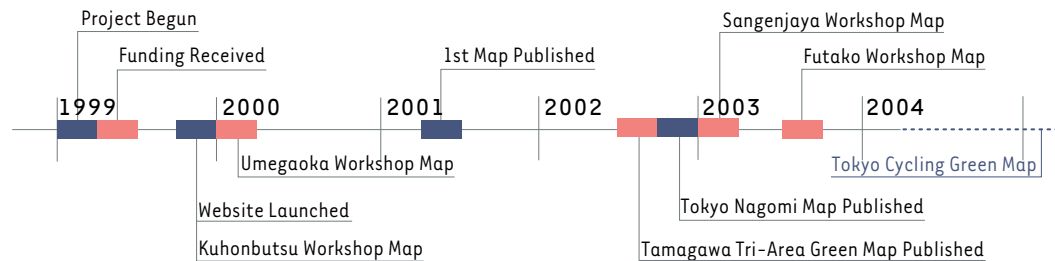


Detail of Setagaya Green Map (2001)

What is “green” about a mega-city like Tokyo, home to 12 million people? In former times, Tokyo consisted of sustainable, efficient communities, where “waste” was recycled into material for other purposes. Such traditional practices have been replaced by modern commercial systems, consuming energy and resources on a colossal scale. Farmland and gardens were developed into high-rises, reducing the amount of greenery, and today Tokyo becomes a sweltering heat island each summer. Those who knew Tokyo 30 years ago regret these changes.

However, many community-strengthening practices can be found in Setagaya, making this district unique and famous in Japan. Working in southwest Tokyo, the Setagaya Green Map was created to chart the precious resources that are often neglected by economically-focused urban development.

Setagaya’s was the first Green Map created in the metropolitan Tokyo area.



From the start, I doubted that Tokyo could be charted on a single Green Map due to its size. Even Setagaya, one of 23 wards that make up central Tokyo, is too big to be considered a community, with its population of 0.8 million. I decided to first map the region that I live in and know very well. The core mapmaking team, Hiroo Maruya, Nobue Suzuki and myself, are all architects who live here and are involved in community activities.

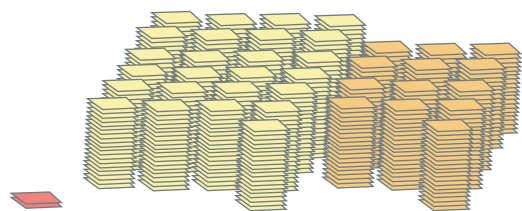
## Map Data

- Language: Japanese
- Number of Map Editions: 3
- Published Map Formats: Print, Website
- Number of Sites Charted: 140
- Number of Global Icons Used: 28



Tokyo's three local icons

# Mapmaking



2000 Setagaya Green Maps, 500,000 Tamagawa Tri-Area Green Maps, 260,000 Nagomi Maps

We started creating neighborhood Green Maps with community members through what we call *machi-meguri* workshops. *Machi* means town, and *meguri* refers both to walking around and the circulation of value within the community. We held the first one in the Kuhonbutsu neighborhood in 1999, when GMS Director Wendy Brawer visited Japan.

Our *machi-meguri* workshops begin with a presentation of Green Map Icons. With basic knowledge of Green Mapmaking, participants then go out in small groups with a blank map and icon index. Workshops are most successful when guided by local community leaders. The unique neighborhood maps created at workshops, distributed as free newsletters to participants and community members, are sub-sets of the overall Setagaya Green Map. All participants are credited on these expressive maps, showing that the information is not filtered in the same way as on the bigger Setagaya Green Map.



(left to right)  
Setagaya Green Map (2001)  
Tamagawa Tri-Area Green Map legend (2002)  
Tokyo Nagomi Map (2002)  
Children exploring their neighborhood using the Green Map Icons at the Futako workshop

The key idea behind *machi-meguri* workshops is that the map users also become mapmakers. Usually elderly people who grew up in the area are happy to explain local history to children; they provide background information while a Green Map facilitator helps classify and record the data.

Appropriate icons are chosen through discussions, with new ones created when needed, such as our *daikon* (Japanese radish) icon symbolizing "community farm." We found that children are always good at creating new icons. The discussions can also be useful in children's environmental education. For example, when a child proposes adding a convenience store icon, a conversation follows on its appropriateness compared to local stores.

## Technical Data

### Software:

Adobe Photoshop  
Adobe Illustrator  
GIS software

### Hardware:

Computers  
Digital cameras  
Videos  
Bicycles  
Projectors

### Paper:

Tree-free kenaf and recycled

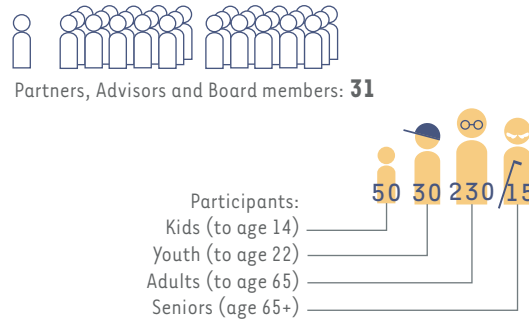
### Map Structure:

Folding

- Setagaya Green Map: 88.4 X 77 cm / 34.8 X 30.3 in
- Tamagawa Tri-Area Green Map: 59.4 X 42 cm / 23.4 X 16.6 in
- Tokyo Nagomi Map: 50.8 X 36.8 cm / 20 X 14.5 in

# Teamwork

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A series of *machi-meguri* workshops were held in different areas of Setagaya in collaboration with local community groups, such as Earth Day Money Setagaya (local currency) and Tamagawa Volunteer Bureau. Workshop participants are invited through these networks. We also have a list of experts who support us from specific fields. Masakuni Enomoto, an expert naturalist in the Setagaya area, guides workshops when nature observation is part of the program.

To gather comprehensive information for the first printed version of the Setagaya Green Map issued in June 2001, we distributed questionnaires at community events and by mail. 180 proposed sites were filtered and checked to ensure correct information, an important process requiring regular updating. Green spaces on private property and historical buildings sometimes disappear, and commercial entities often change. The number of sites included in the first version is rather low because this process

involves a lot of work. We intend to filter information online for the next version.

Inspired by other Green Maps including Toronto's, we decided to use an aerial photograph as the base map to give an overall image of existing greenery. However, without road lines clearly indicated, we found it difficult to use as a walking guide. We overlaid the photograph with precise digital road data to facilitate its use as a map, obtaining all original data free of charge from the local government for this non-profit activity. Adjusting more than 30 aerial images was painful work, but accomplished thanks to the effort of a core member.

The compass rose on the Nagomi Map reflects its "peace and quiet" theme



<< Specially prepared base maps are used to collect data at each workshop



Participants eagerly exchange ideas about sites in their neighborhood



<< Kuhonbutsu workshop participants discuss criteria for their neighborhood Green Map

Seeing things >> from a new perspective at the *machi-meguri* workshop in Kuhonbutsu



# Economics

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Setagaya Community Design Fund supported the first Setagaya Green Map. A local printing company, Buyodo, provided a large discount, and the map was distributed free at green spots and community events. Requests continue to come in from our website. We charge 300 yen (US\$2.80) per copy to those outside of Setagaya, but residents pay only for postage in exchange for their contributions to our update questionnaire.

The free neighborhood Green Maps created at *machi-meguri* workshops are made in A3 format to fit the least expensive offset printer. Another map charting the Tamagawa Tri-Area was published in a free newspaper. This project created a controversy among core members because a real estate developer sponsored the 500,000 full-color aerial view maps. We decided that since the paper would be wasted in any case, it would be better to encourage longer use for a good purpose. We considered the map a success because



Approximately **36,000** website visitors per year



(upper, lower) A page from the Green Map Japan website.  
World Green Maps exhibit and Icon balloons created for Tokyo Art Jungle's Yamanote-sen Green Map project at the Tokyo International Forum (August 2002)

of the positive reactions we received, including a schoolteacher who requested extra copies for her class.



Green Map Icons, as shown on Tokyo's Setagaya and Nagomi maps

These icons are the common currency of all Green Maps



## Economic Data

**Type of Organization:** Non-profit

### Support:

Grants, private funding, in-kind

### Major Project Supporters:

Setagaya Community Design Fund

### Number of Paid or

**Volunteer Jobs Created:** 10

**Cost of Map:** Free, 300 yen or postage paid

**Spin Off Projects:** Exhibits, conferences, organized bicycle ride

## Assessment

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(left to right) Press coverage has included the *International Herald Tribune* (08 May 03), a promotional poster inviting the public to Setagaya's first workshop, article in *Asahi Shimbun* (27 March 03), inside page of the cover story on the Nagomi Map in *Be-Pal* magazine (December 02)

In determining selection criteria for the first edition, core group members focused on key factors essential to sustainable living — community involvement, reuse/recycling of material and environmental preservation. We classified Green Map Icons into three categories: Food, Resources and Greenery. One of our major concerns, urban farming, relates to all three. For example, Ohira Farm is an active green space producing organic vegetables that are sold to local community members, who in turn provide extra labor on the farm. Some organic waste from the community is also composted at the farm.

There is no single Tokyo Green Map yet, but starting with Setagaya has turned out to be a good choice. Many other Green Mapmaking activities have since emerged in other districts of Tokyo, including Suginami, Koganei and around the Yamanote-sen train line. In a big city like Tokyo, the character of each community is very different.

A separate but related Green Map, the Tokyo Nagomi Map, was created in collaboration with *Be-Pal* magazine in December 2002 in an effort to locate “peace and quiet” in the city. It was published along with a 20-page article illustrating the spots. Covering most of the central area of Tokyo, it provides information on bike facilities and highlights *nagomi* spots, where people can relax and feel green. These places are more easily accessible by bicycle because they tend to be located off the major train lines and arterial roads. *Nagomi* spots are linked by streets safe for cycling.



(upper, lower) A finished neighborhood Green Map produced at the Kuchinbutsu workshop. The Tamagawa Tri-Area Green Map had the largest print run of any Green Map to date

## Conclusion

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In the near future, the Tokyo Cycling Green Map will add an additional layer about bicycling that connects district Green Maps and includes safe routes and rental/repair shops. Urban Ecology Tokyo, a new group extended from Setagaya Green Map, will provide communication tools such as an interactive database, as well as support for Green Mapmakers and bicycle advocacy groups in Tokyo. Establishing a citywide cycling route network and forming the bicycling community into a more powerful coalition are the main objectives of this project.

Our Green Map Japan network, which I co-initiated with Misako Yomosa of Kyoto Green Map in 2002, has continued to grow stronger. We have developed a website, [www.greenmap.jp](http://www.greenmap.jp), as well as educational tools, thanks to support from Japan-US Community Education and Exchange. We felt it was necessary to create a national network for mapmakers to exchange information, and to ensure independence from commercial influences, which are sometimes drawn by extensive media

***“The liveliness of the map is totally different from regular maps. I realized even trees on private property can contribute to a better environment.”***

– Tomoko Honda

coverage of our Green Maps. I hope to see Green Maps become a platform for the general public to move towards a more sustainable way of living.

***“I was pleased to find this wonderful map. Since I am seeking a good place to live in Setagaya, the map will give me a clue.”***

– Naoko Sonobe

***“After seeing the Tokyo Nagomi Map, I wish to get involved in mapmaking. I always feel the need for a better bicycle environment in Tokyo.”*** – Mihoko Uramoto



Ohira farm grows organic vegetables in a residential neighborhood of Setagaya



Child-friendly icons are given to places such as Hanegi Play Park, an adventure facility supported by volunteers and the local government



The former Kosaka residence is both a historic site and "Greenery" example



<< Places of cultural significance, such as this traditional craftsman's shop, are included as "Resource" sites



A patch of urban forest preserved by community action against development



Setagaya Green Map (2001)

## Credits

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<< Tokyo Cycling Green Map project members at Royal Palace Park

## Want These Maps?

online: [www.greenmap.jp/tokyo](http://www.greenmap.jp/tokyo)

email: [horuichi@tamabi.ac.jp](mailto:horuichi@tamabi.ac.jp)

or visit the online store at

[www.greenatlas.org](http://www.greenatlas.org)

[www.greenmap.org](http://www.greenmap.org) is your global link to every local Green Map project, multilingual icon posters, an invitation to participate, and more.



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