

Iida Municipal Toyama Junior High School – Learning about Wood and Forestry through the School Forest

Located in the Southern Alps Biosphere Reserve (BR), Iida Municipal Toyama Junior High School deepens students' understanding of their local community and natural environment through learning activities centered around the school-owned School Forest. This program allows students to engage in experiential learning about forestry, once a key industry in the region, while reexamining their knowledge from the perspective of the SDGs to consider a sustainable society.

Overview of Activities

The School Forest program began in the first year of junior high school. Students participated in forest care activities such as thinning and pruning, learning how managed forests can grow healthily and contribute to disaster prevention by preventing landslides. Through these experiences, students gained an understanding of the multifaceted functions of forests and recognized the importance of environmental conservation.

Subsequently, students explored ways to utilize School Forest more effectively, focusing on the use and distribution of wood. They visited a wood distribution center to observe how timber is processed and distributed, and they experienced making chairs using wood-processing machinery. This allowed them to learn about the current state and potential of local industries while experiencing the joy of craftsmanship.

The use of School Forest extends beyond the school, contributing to the local community. As part of their second-year activities, students developed a walking trail, the Toyama School Path, within the forest. This trail is not only safe for local residents to use but also serves as a venue for environmental education. Through such efforts, students gained a deeper understanding of the significance of utilizing local resources.

Additionally, the bench-making project involved using wood from School Forest to provide benches for local public facilities. This initiative strengthened ties with the local community and demonstrated the benefits of using local resources to enhance regional well-being.

Integration with the SDGs

Through these activities, the school reaffirmed the importance of learning from the perspective of sustainability as outlined in the SDGs. For example:

Thinning and pruning experiences relate to SDG 15 (Life on Land), teaching students how forest conservation contributes to biodiversity conservation and disaster prevention.

Learning about the use and processing of wood aligns with SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure), and Infrastructure, offering insights into the current state and potential of local industries.

Developing walking trails and making benches reflects SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), as these efforts contribute to creating more livable communities.

These SDG-integrated learning experiences gave students a tangible sense of contributing to the creation of a sustainable society.

Future Plans

Through School Forest, students not only learned about forest management and resource utilization but also discovered new ways to connect the natural environment with human life. Moving forward, they plan to continue enriching School Forest and developing new projects involving wood, such as improving school facilities and collaborating with local residents to create products. These initiatives aim to expand their contributions to the local community even further.