

Buried Forest: Discovery

In 1983, workers in the Azukihara district in the city of Ōda were restructuring a rice field when they unearthed an extremely large cedar tree about a meter below the surface. They continued digging, thinking to uproot and remove the tree, but 5 meters down they still had not reached the base. Around that same time, laborers took the photograph shown here of two men standing in a pit with an enormous tree trunk draped in blue cloth. Unaware of the significance of their discovery, the workers simply cut away part of the tree and filled in the hole, leaving no trace of what lay buried.

In 1990, teacher and volcanologist Matsui Seiji (1933–2012) came across the photo and began trying to determine the tree's location. Finding the tree was difficult with only manual digging equipment, but eventually a full-scale excavation was launched. In 1998, heavy machinery was used to uncover the first giant. As the search widened, more trees appeared, revealing an entire forest lost to time.