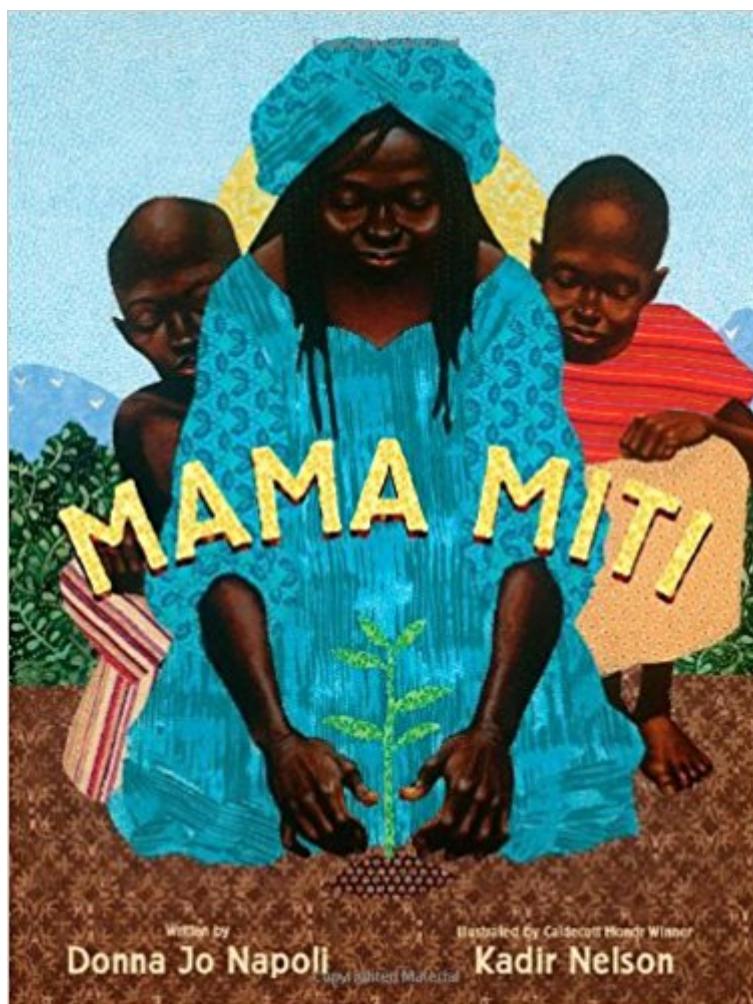


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# Mama Miti: Wangari Maathai And The Trees Of Kenya



## Synopsis

Through artful prose and beautiful illustrations, Donna Jo Napoli and Kadir Nelson tell the true story of Wangari Muta Maathai, known as “Mama Miti,” who in 1977 founded the Green Belt Movement, an African grassroots organization that has empowered many people to mobilize and combat deforestation, soil erosion, and environmental degradation. Today more than 30 million trees have been planted throughout Mama Miti’s native Kenya, and in 2004 she became the first African woman to win the Nobel Peace Prize. Wangari Muta Maathai has changed Kenya tree by tree—and with each page turned, children will realize their own ability to positively impact the future.

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: AD710L (What's this?)

Hardcover: 40 pages

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Language: English

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Product Dimensions: 9 x 0.4 x 12 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.1 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars 40 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #235,588 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #118 in Books > Children's Books > Geography & Cultures > Explore the World > Africa #320 in Books > Children's Books > Education & Reference > Science Studies > Nature > Environment #1543 in Books > Children's Books > Biographies

Age Range: 4 - 8 years

Grade Level: Preschool - 3

## Customer Reviews

Luminous illustrations are the highlight of this third recent picture-book biography of Wangari Maathai, the Kenyan environmental activist who received the 2004 Nobel Peace Prize. In brief, poetic lines that have a folktale tone, Napoli describes how “wise Wangari” helped Kenyan village women solve problems from hunger to dirty water with the same solution: “Plant a tree.” Eventually, Maathai’s Green Belt movement became a worldwide mission. Jeanette Winter’s *Wangari’s Trees of Peace: A True Story*

from Africa and Claire A. Nivola's *Planting the Trees of Kenya: The Story of Wangari Maathai* (both 2008) integrate more background context, and readers encountering Maathai's story for the first time here will need to start with the appended short biography in order to understand the story's generalized references. Most noteworthy is Nelson's vibrant collage artwork, which features soaring portraits and lush landscapes in oil paint and printed fabrics. An author's note about sources and a glossary of Kikuyu and Swahili words used throughout the text close this moving tribute, which will partner well with Winter's and Nivola's titles. Grades K-3. --Gillian Engberg

\* Nelson's pictures, a jaw-dropping union of African textiles collaged with oil paintings, brilliantly capture the villagers' clothing and the greening landscape. This is, in a word, stunning. *Kirkus, STARRED REVIEW\**

Nelson's (We Are the Ship) breathtaking portraits of Maathai often have a beatific quality; bright African textiles represent fields, mountains, and Maathai's beloved trees. Napoli (The Earth Shook) creates a vivid portrait of the community from which Maathai's tree-planting mission grows. *Publishers Weekly, STARRED REVIEW* "A beautiful introduction for children just learning about the Greenbelt Movement. *School Library Journal* "Luminous illustrations are the highlight of this third recent picture-book biography of Wangari Maathai, the Kenyan environmental activist who received the 2004 Nobel Peace Prize. In brief, poetic lines that have a folktale tone, Napoli describes how wise Wangari helped Kenyan village women solve problems from hunger to dirty water with the same solution: "Plant a tree." Most noteworthy is Nelson's vibrant collage artwork, which features soaring portraits and lush landscapes in oil paint and printed fabrics. *Booklist* "Illustrator Kadir Nelson intensifies the text's tribute to East African culture, mixing oil paints and textiles in collages that capture the quest of women looking for answers as well as the beauty and vastness of Maathai's project . . . Especially dazzling! Makes vibrantly clear how strong and resourceful Maathai and other African women have been in restoring trees and peace to their world. *The Washington Post* "This picture book glows from every page as Napoli and Nelson write and illustrate the inspiring story of ecologist and Nobel Peace Prize winner Wangari Maathai. A lovely, stirring picture book with a simple message for us all: in the midst of change, development, and upheaval, there is always a place for wisdom and peace. *Mark David Bradshaw, Watermark Books, Kansas* "Will inspire children of all ages. *Ellen Scott, The*

Bookworm, Omaha, Nebraska" This is the true story of Wangari Muta Maathai, a Kenyan woman who helped to bring trees back to a sadly deforested country. Her grassroots efforts to help her people and the environment at the same time had a profound effect not only on Kenya, but on people all over the world who heard her story and who learned her lessons. With a lyrical text and stunning multimedia art, this picture book is a must for every reader, both young and not so young." --

### Through the Looking Glass Children's Book Review

Mama Miti: Wangari Maathai and The Trees of Kenya is a fictionalized account of the early childhood of the 2004 Nobel Peace Prize Recipient, Dr. Wangari Maathai and her work to stop deforestation in the East African country of Kenya. Mama Miti is part biography, part fiction; part Sunday morning sermon, part ecology lecture; part Dr. Seuss, part Kahlil Gibran. "Mama Miti" as a young girl was taught by her tribal elders the significance of caring for the natural environment and, especially, for trees. She was also taught there was an indefinable spiritual link that enabled trees, by their mere presence or any of its parts, be it fruit or limb, to provide nourishment, protection or overall peace to the community. When trees were removed, Miti was taught, the foundation of a community was also destroyed. Miti carried this message into adulthood. Some time had passed and Miti was now a vendor who sat beneath a palm tree in the center of Kenya. Miti also developed a reputation as a renaissance woman whose advice brought prosperity ("Thayu nyumba") to those who sought it. One by one, women came from all over, "Mama Miti...our goats are starving...wild animals steal my chickens...our stream is too dirty to drink from...my home fell apart." Each time, her response was "plant a tree!" Not immediately, but over the course of time, Kenya flourished. Open fields became green with vegetation, communities grew, and peace abounded. \*\*\*\*\* \*\*\*\*\* \*\*\*\*\* The spiritual connection to trees and plant life was verified to me when, in a discussion with Kenyan scholars, I learned that the book didn't express the full extent of how trees are revered by many of Kenya's ethnic tribes. According to them, many religious services are held underneath a tree and only if a tree is available. Some sects even mandate that burial services be held at designated tree(s). This (or these) tree served as burial markers with the explicit warning that that tree is not to be desecrated or removed by fear of some form of esoteric retribution. \*\*\*\*\* \*\*\*\*\* \*\*\*\*\* The real life Wangari Maathai's life was not too far from the fictionalized account. A native Kenyan, Ms. Maathai went to school abroad and was the first African woman to earn a PhD (1968). While working with her husband, a populist politician, in the 70's & 80's, Maathai joined many local and international relief efforts to bring economic revitalization and ecological advancements to her native country. Soon she started her own NGO, "The Green Belt Movement," which had as its primary purpose to

plant trees in desolate places. For her many efforts, Dr. Maathai was awarded the Nobel Prize, the first for an African Woman.

A children's story of how Wangari Maathai became one of the world's leading environmentalists. Should get children interested in a subject they probably never thought of but who will be most harmed by it.

The artwork is striking. The story of Wangari Mathai is told very simply, which is fine for small children. There are few details (and little logical connection as to how a woman who needs food or firewood now/today is going to be helped by planting a tree which will take years to grow and produce them) but the concept of why we should plant trees and the variety of things that trees provide us, comes through in almost a poetic style.

I had never heard of this moving story before. I loved it and so did my students.

Wonderful true story with beautiful illustrations. It will be fun to share with students.

This is a wonderful book about an extraordinary woman! Beautifully illustrated and simply told.

Beautiful book. Arrived quick and in good order. Thank you

This is another wonderful book about Wangari Maathai, a woman of courage, strength and much intelligence

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Zambia and Zimbabwe ... Countries: Botswana, Kenya, Namibia, R) Amazing Pictures and Facts About Kenya: The Most Amazing Fact Book for Kids About Kenya (Kid's U) KENYA Country Studies: A brief, comprehensive study of Kenya Seeds of Change: Wangari's Gift to the World The Hoosier Mama Book of Pie: Recipes, Techniques, and Wisdom from the Hoosier Mama Pie Company Best Wok Recipes from Mama Li's Kitchen: Healthy, Quick and Easy One Pot Meals for Busy Families (Mama Li's Kitchen Book 1) Yo Mama Jokes: 201+ Best Yo Momma jokes! (Comedy, Jokes And Riddles, Humour, Jokes For Kids, Yo Mama Jokes) Yo Mama Jokes from All Around the Block: Just Like Yo Mama, Fool!, Volume 1 151+ Funny Yo Momma Jokes: The Funniest Yo Mama Jokes / Your Mama Jokes Christmas Trees: Growing and Selling Trees, Wreaths, and Greens Watercolourist's A-Z of Trees and Foliage: An Illustrated Directory of Trees from a Watercolourist's Perspective Growing Trees from Seed: A Practical Guide to Growing Native Trees, Vines and Shrubs Northwest Trees: Identifying and Understanding the Region's Native Trees

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