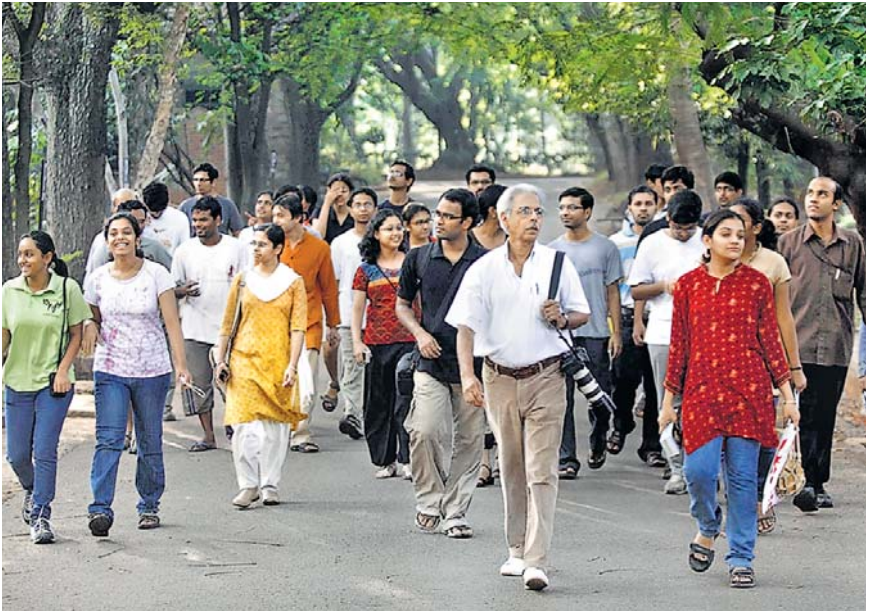


Walk 'n' talk trees at IISc campus

A Veeramani



NATURE WALK: Professor K Sankara Rao conducts a Tree Walk at IISc, on Saturday

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Did you know that the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) has over 800 species of plants and trees and the campus by-lanes are named Silver Oak Marg, Nilgiri Marg, Javanica Marg, among others? Now, to preserve the rich flora, the Centre for Ecological Sciences (CES) at IISc has begun an initiative to affix name-boards on to trees and create awareness. Since April 10, weekly 'Tree Walks' are being held to educate students about flowering plants on the campus.

Professor K Sankara Rao, Distinguished Fellow at CES and author of *Indian Institute of Science Campus: A Botanist's Delight*, takes a group of 20-30 people, mostly youngsters and students, on Tree Walks across the campus and informs them about the scientific names of various exotic and native trees, their common names and uses, exclusive features of trees, etc. All along, the group listens in rapt attention and peppers him

with questions when in doubt.

Rao says summer is the best time to see flowers in full bloom.

However, the Tree Walk comes with a tinge of sadness. Rao says some trees will be pulled down to make way for Metro Rail construction. "Nothing can substitute Nature and fresh air generated by it. Fans and massive concrete structures cannot substitute this naturally-obtained luxury," adds Rao.

Trees will be pulled down to make way for Metro Rail construction. But **fans and concrete structures** cannot substitute for nature

"The flowers of the white meranti are highly fragrant and attract many honeybees. We have only one tree on campus and can savour its smell even if we are several blocks away during the flowering season," says a student.