

ET QUICK FIX

AFFORESTATION DRIVE

It is during a hot summer that the realisation about the city's fast-depleting green cover becomes stark. Often they fall prey to development but trees are also being dispensed with for frivolous reasons such as "disturbing the residents" and "blocking a billboard". This is the right time of the year to plant and nurture saplings so they take root during the monsoon.

How to Expand Green Cover and Sustain It

'Plant Trees Along Bare Highways'

"The lay person is not aware of the functional aspects and the benefits of trees," Ramachandra said, adding that there is a need for deep environmental education for people to understand the purpose of trees and greening



TV Ramachandra

Centre for Ecological Sciences, IISc

STEPS:

- Planting needs to be done on both sides of roads and on medians. Our bare highways badly need trees
- Vacant plots and military land are other best places to plant
- Native species such as neem, honge, mango, banyan and peepal are best suited for the sides, while Singapore cherry, coral jasmine and sita ashoka trees are suitable for medians
- Do not choke the bottom of the trees with concrete
- Instead of exotic species, plant native trees as they give nectar and fruits, attracting bees, birds, and keeping the ecosystem alive.
- Mini forests with wild species covering about 1-2 acres should be set up in each ward. This will moderate the temperature and increase the water table.
- All planting exercises need to be geo-tagged and made public



OFFICIAL LINE

Dipika Bajpai, Deputy Conservator of Forest, Bengaluru Urban, said that the forest department was yet to get any requests for planting this year. "Unless somebody or an organisation volunteers to give their land, there is hardly any space for planting within the city," she said, citing the example of Whitefield, Madivala, Kadugodi and Sarjapura, which are devoid of greenery and lack open spaces. "We have to look for space on roadsides and plant saplings."

'Nurture the Saplings for a Year'

"More people attach themselves to human causes than for the cause of the environment," he said, adding that there is a need for a green movement. "We need to realise that there is no future if we do not act"



Durgesh Agrahari

Head of Partnerships & Projects, Say Trees

STEPS:

- Planting is not the end of greening. All saplings need to be nurtured at least for one year after the planting to ensure that they survive
- Nurturing means watering, de-weeding, tilling the soil and adding of leaf mulch at least once in a week. Need tree-guards to protect from animals and other damage
- Each family has to plant and take care of two or three saplings
- Plant where no overhead wires or underground piping will obstruct its growth. Boundaries of a neighbourhood lake, campus of a local government school are good choices
- The new layouts and residential complexes that are coming up need to prioritise green cover
- Greening can extend even to our homes and offices