

300 saplings planted to mark I-Day

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Miyawaki method adopted to increase green cover Members of Team Of Social Service (TOSS), a local NGO, planted 300 trees using the Miyawaki afforestation method at the Golden Rock Railway Sewage Plant here to commemorate the 73rd Independence Day. Supported by the Railways and Bishop Heber College, volunteers planted nearly 320 saplings within 1,500 sq f of space. "The interesting thing is that one would think that none of the plants would grow well. However, it is scientifically proven that because of how close they are in proximity, the plants will grow faster, competing for space and sunlight," said Sai Balaji of TOSS. The Miyawaki afforestation method is a technique of urban forestry pioneered by Japanese botanist Akira Miyawaki. It involves planting a number of different types of trees close together in a small pit. By closely planting many random trees close together in a small area enriches the green cover and reinforces the richness of the land. This will lead to co-existence of plants and as a matter of fact, each plant draws from the other vital nutrients and they grow to become strong and healthy. The process began about a month ago, and the first step was determining the soil texture after removing debris and weeds in the area. "The soil in the area was not suitable for growing plants. So, Indian Railways helped and brought red soil which is very expensive. Following this, a four-foot deep pit was dug," Mr. Balaji said. The pit was layered with red soil, cow dung, compost from the Railway compost yard, coco-peat or dry sugarcane stalk as a water retainer to prepare for the plants. The entire preparation cost ₹30,000, said Mr. Balaji. Another important aspect of Miyawaki afforestation is a sustainable water source. "The water pipeline layout needs to be designed in a detailed manner. The forest should be watered regularly for the first 2-3 years. We have channelled the treated water from the sewage treatment plant to reach the area. Nearly 1,000 litres of water which was being routed to a coconut plantation will be rerouted here," said P. Sethumadavan, Environmental Engineer, Central Workshops, Golden Rock. Saplings of three sizes- one foot, three feet and six feet were planted by nearly 100 volunteers at an event inaugurated by P. N. Jha, Chief Workshop Manager, Central Workshops, Golden Rock along with R. Victor Lazarus, Chief Advisor of TOSS and professor, Bishop Heber College. Nearly 300 species of native plants were identified by TOSS and sourced with the help of the forest department. "Most of them were brought from Siruganur near Manachanallur, while some were brought by volunteers after reading about the event on social media," said Mr. Balaji.



SOURCE: <https://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/Tiruchirapalli/300-saplings-planted-to-mark-1-day/article29103794.ece>