

A small forest amidst a big concrete jungle

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Trendsetter:The forest grown by adopting the 'Miyawaki' method, at the Pelletisation Plant of Essar Steel.K.R. Deepak

Imagine a dense forest with real green trees, located in an industry, right in the heart of the city? Hallucination, unbelievable? But it's true. One can replicate a forest in a small space amidst concrete jungles, say those who developed the man-made forest at the Vizag Pelletisation Plant of Essar Steel.

'Miyawaki', a relatively new technique in afforestation, is fast gaining popularity in different parts of the globe. Developed by Akira Miyawaki, a Japanese botanist, it provides a solution to cities, which are turning into concrete jungles. Saplings grow 10 times faster and forests grow 30 times denser in a given area.

A walk down the vast expanse of the company's plant makes one wonder whether the industry was constructed amidst a jungle. Barring the administrative building, a few concrete structures, roads and the factory area, one can see greenery all around. Shade grass provides a green carpet all over the vacant spaces, and trees and plants with flowers of different hues are a soothing eyeful.

The plant management had identified 750 sq. yards of vacant land for developing a dense jungle under Miyawaki. In less than a year, the barren land has been converted into a jungle with 1,875 plants and trees of 20 different species. They include: peepal, neem, guava, sapota, amla, teak, tamarind, jamun, mango and lemon.

Everything organic

How was it done? The land was dug up and filled with red mud up to two-feet. Coconut peat was added to a certain extent to help the soil retain more moisture and water. Organic compost was used for the healthy growth of the plants. Rice husk was poured on the surface and spread evenly all over the site. Rice husk acts as a perforator and allows roots to grow quickly.

Sprinklers are arranged at regular intervals for watering. Because, once the jungle grows, it would be difficult for a person to go into the forest. The forest attracts a lot of snakes and the company has hired the services of a professional snake-catcher to catch the reptiles and hand them over to the zoo on a regular basis.

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