

# Encourage children to plant trees on birthdays, says forest minister

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

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**Coimbatore:** Forest minister K Ramachandran on Thursday urged people to encourage children to plant a tree on their birthdays to increase forest cover.

Speaking at an event organized by the Rotary Club of Coimbatore to felicitate 26 farmers, the minister said that the state government plans to increase forest cover from 23.8% to 33% in 10 years. "Every year, three to four crore saplings have to be planted to achieve the target. It cannot be reached without the cooperation of people," he said.

The awards will motivate others to do better in farming, the minister said. "Farmers should consult experts in agriculture colleges and universities before selecting crops, so that they will not face any loss. They should select crops best suited for their region."



**THE HANDS THAT FEED:** Forest minister K Ramachandran on Thursday attended an event to felicitate 26 farmers

"I dream of a day, when the government will provide farmers the required materials for farming for free and will purchase all their produce," The minister, who is also a farmer, said.

M Krishnamoorthy, a farmer from Pannimadai village, was selected as the outstanding farmer for 2021 for his contribution towards integrated farming practices. Krishnamoorthy, who practices agriculture in his 4.5 acres, turned to organic farming seven years ago. "People should take up organic farming and integ-

rated farming to bring down the input cost and to increase income," he said.

"I am growing crops including coconut, arecanut and banana and rearing fish, indigenous chicken, ducks, goats and cows," he said. "I earn not less than Rs 10 lakh a year through integrated farming. Around 10,000 people visit my farm every year to learn the basics. The Indian Council of Agricultural Research - Krishi Vigyan Kendra has made me the lead trainer in integrated farming," Krishnamoorthy added.