

Get the ball rolling

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Join this mega effort that aims to make 10 lakh seed balls, of 30 varieties of trees, in one day

Could Chennai's tree population jump up by 10 lakh in the coming months? If everything goes according to Arul Jude's plans, yes. The founder of Live Events company is holding a seed-ball demonstration and has invited anyone and everyone to participate and make their own seed balls. Arul is offering about 30 varieties of seeds, ranging from neem, rain tree, peepal, bael, rosewood, plum and more.

"We did a similar event last year, and distributed almost 45,000 seeds free of cost to various colleges and NGOs. This time we want to break that record," says Arul. "Thanks to our first edition, we were able to raise awareness among budding environment enthusiasts about how carrying out seed ball drives is one of the many ways in which they can help restore the green cover."

Arul is working in collaboration with Ver Foundation, an NGO from Coimbatore. "We have facilitators from Ver who will demonstrate how to make seed balls," he says. Each ball has one seed, and its diameter ranges from half an inch to one inch. "We use red soil and fertiliser mostly cow dung, in 90-10 capacity. And then, you press the seed inside the ball. It's pretty simple really!"

Many of the seeds are sourced, with the help of Verfoundation, from the Forest Department. Arul's company also invites people to donate seeds in their personal capacity for these drives. "Sourcing red soil is actually costly," he says.

Adding that he is in touch with various institutions: corporates many from the IT sector, colleges, schools, public sector offices and NGOs, he says, "It is important for everyone, especially children, to work with the soil and their bare hands." The seeds are given free of cost, but the only thing he asks in exchange is that the participants track the seeds' growth. "The advantage with seed balls is that they can be thrown even as you drive on the highway from say, Chennai to Bengaluru. But I want the institutions who are taking the seeds to plant in their campuses, to send back pictures of the germinated plants. This way I can track their survival rate," he says. The seedball-making event will be held at DG Vaishnav College, on September 22, from 7 am to 1 pm. Participants are requested to bring papers to lay down, and cloth bags to take the seed balls home.

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