

Haritha Keralam Mission: Grow a mini forest around you

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It just takes a minimum of one cent of land and a love for greenery to set up a 'Pachathuruthu' (an islet of greenery) and for everything else, a lot of help is available out there.

'Pachathuruthu', a project of the Haritha Keralam Mission, that was launched a week ago on World Environment Day, aims to grow "miniature forests" in every vacant space available in a systematic and useful manner.

The Mission will coordinate various stakeholders like local bodies, the employment guarantee schemes, the departments of forest and agriculture to support any one interested in setting up a 'Pachathuruthu', with advice, techniques, saplings, and even labour.

Training

Around 30 local bodies were represented in an initial training for various stakeholders in Kozhikode and Wayanad districts held here on Tuesday.

“All local bodies in Kozhikode have expressed interest in being part of the ‘Pachathuruthu’ project. However, only 23 grama panchayats, three municipalities and Kozhikode Corporation are being trained in the first phase,” said P. Prakashan, District Coordinator of Haritha Keralam Mission.

The Mission mainly aims to woo local bodies which have a lot of excess land, especially river banks and uninhabited islets.

Added benefits

“We will seek the help of local NSS units or clubs for the maintenance of the mini forests set up in such spaces. While the forests will protect the banks from eroding, the public in turn will refrain from dumping waste on a well maintained bank,” Mr. Prakashan explained the added benefits of the scheme.

The officials of the Department of Agriculture will provide technical support and timely advice while the Forest Department will provide saplings to support any one interested in setting up a mini forest, however small their available space is.

Variety of plants

“The kind of plants, usually of different heights and nature, will differ also based on the topography. We cannot use the same plants on a hill slope, a marshy land and a river bank,” Mr. Prakashan said.

The manual labour required for the upkeep of the forest will be provided by workers of various employment guarantee schemes.

“After the severe drought that we faced this summer, there is an increased awareness among people about the need for greenery and hence an interest in the project. So far, the response has been very good,” Mr. Prakashan added.

Source: <https://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/kozhikode/grow-a-mini-forest-around-you/article27895021.ece>