

Institute to breed new varieties of drought-resistant trees in city

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Coimbatore: Institute of Forest Genetics and Tree Breeding (IFGTB) is working towards growing trees that have high drought and water stress tolerance, director of the institute Mohit Gera said. Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of an event to mark the 'World Forestry Day' organized by the Tamil Nadu Forest Academy in the city on Wednesday, Gera said that they have been working closely with the forest department to breed trees with specific properties that include absorbing more carbon, high heat potential and having high survival limits during the summer season.

"We are working to develop a species of eucalyptus to suit the local conditions of Coimbatore including climate and soil type. Not just eucalyptus, but research is on to develop newer varieties of other trees also," he said. Gera said these new varieties produce a lot of wood and wood for pulping, as the department has been working with public sector companies including the Tamil Nadu Paper Limited who will benefit from such trees.

The urban trees not just provide the cooling effect but also remove particulate matters including carbon monoxide. They also help in mitigate climate change by removing accumulated carbon-dioxide from the atmosphere and slips them into woods and vegetation, he said. The carbon stored in forests is higher than the carbon in fossil fuels.

"But, we need to increase the green cover as forests are the best defense against climate change. 40% of the ground cover should be forest to mitigate with the climate change," he added.

"Unless innovation is being brought in, survival is going to be difficult," he added.

Stressing on the need to protect forests, additional principal chief conservator of forest Yogesh Diwedi said that there is a direct conflict between the development and forest. "We need to balance development and nature. But often we tend to forget it," he said.

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