

# Thoothukudi Corporation's garbage yard is slowly turning into a man-made forest

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Saplings planted in Miyawaki method at the Thoothukudi Corporation garbage yard near Ayyanarpuram on Thoothukudi – Tharuvaikulam Road is turning into a green cover. | Photo Credit: RAJESH N

The Thoothukudi Corporation's garbage yard, which was once barren and was emanating thick fumes is now getting a 'green cover', thanks to the hundreds of trees planted in this sprawling campus by the urban local body.

The degradable and non-degradable waste generated in Thoothukudi Corporation was being dumped in the urban civic body's yard near Ayyanarpuram on Thoothukudi – Tharuvaikulam Road for several decades. The fire breaking out in the garbage yard and consequent smoke

billowing from this premises would enter the nearby residential areas causing a lot of law and order problems for the Corporation.

Through bio-mining, the waste dumped on the two acres of land was removed and the land was prepared for planting 2,000 tree saplings in July 2019 on a trial basis. Since the Corporation's sewage water treatment plant has been established in the next campus, the treated water was used to nourish the tree saplings planted on the 2 acres of land.

After four years, the saplings are now more than 15 feet tall and this encouraging result motivated the Corporation to plant more saplings. After clearing more waste, the urban local body has planted over 1.25 lakh saplings from 200 species including amla, Manila tamarind (kodu-kapuli), guava, banana, pomegranate, pungan, vaagai, herbal plants etc. in the proven Miyawaki method in the second and third phase.

“The trees are growing rapidly as the saplings are nourished with the treated sewage water, which is also being sold to various factories around Thoothukudi for watering their greeneries. The result is excellent,” says Antony Raj, caretaker of the tree saplings.

Even though these trees are just one year old, the guava, Manila tamarind and amla have started bearing fruits. The size of the banana bunch is huge. The workers here also plant vegetables including brinjal, tomato, bitter gourd, ridge gourd, bottle gourd etc. and are harvesting the benefits of their hard work.

The man-made forest has now become a haven for the peacocks which have nests within this forest and feast on their prey, especially small snakes and other insects.

The only threat are the poisonous snakes especially cobra and Russels Viper and the dogs being brought here for animal birth control.

“Some of the dogs that were brought here for birth control managed to escape and are wandering within the premises and pose threat to the workers,” said a woman labourer involved in watering the plants.