

City institute to have high-value forest

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Coimbatore: The Tamil Nadu Agricultural University (TNAU) will set up a high-value forest that will have teak, sandal and red sanders trees on 15 acres within its Forest College and Research Institute campus here. Additional principal chief conservator of forests and director of Tamil Nadu Forest Academy I Anwardeen, along with TNAU vice-chancellor N Kumar, kickstarted the works for the forest by planting red sanders saplings on Thursday. The high-value forest is expected to yield sustainable revenue to the institute after 15 to 20 years. The project is supported by the World Bank through the National Agricultural Higher Education Project (NAHEP). The initiative will also help to create selfreliance in raw material security besides protecting and conserving natural forest resources, TNAU authorities said. One of the key objectives of the Forest College and Research Institute was to establish forests and agroforestry plantation to augment productivity as well as to increase green cover. The pioneer attempt to establish high-value forests was taken up in order to attain the goal and increase the economic sustainability of the institute, said a statement from TNAU. Kumar and Anwardeen also launched one lakh seed ball sowing programme, incorporating indigenous tree species like poovarasu, sandal, soap nut, neem, pungam, vagai and tamarind. It will help to enrich restoration process of native vegetation and augment the ecosystem services of the locality. Besides, a research and development nursery, a wood seasoning and preservation lab and a value-addition workshop was also opened. The facilities will help in research and outreach activities of the institute, even as they provide significant entrepreneurship development avenues to the pupil. During the occasion, Kumar and Anwardeen also launched forest products like honey and immunity booster developed by the institute's incubator in the presence of district forest officer D Venkatesh.

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