



### **Couple gift native tree saplings to tropical gene pool garden in the Nilgiris**

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Two visitors to the Tropical Gene Pool Garden in Nadugani near Pandalur contributed 50 saplings of trees endemic to the Western Ghats to the Forest Department.

The visitors, who had traveled to nurseries in South India, collected the saplings over a six-month period and brought them to Nadugani, where they were planted on a small strip of land.

Speaking to The Hindu, S. Arun said he and his spouse, Anupa Arun, had visited the Gene Pool Garden around six months ago and were inspired by the efforts undertaken by the Forest Department to reintroduce native ecology in degraded areas of forest.

“As we travel extensively, we drew up a list of native trees that will grow well in the region, and started collecting them from different nurseries,” said Mr. Arun. The couple returned to Nadugani recently and handed over the saplings to the Forest Department. They both plan to collect another 50 native species and donate them later this year.

Native trees belonging to 15 different species found in the Western Ghats, including *Syzigium stocksii*, *Syzigium malabaricum*, *Calophyllum apetalum*, *Calophyllum austroindicum* and even the endangered *Dysoxylum malabaricum* were planted in the region.

S.K.Gomathy, botanist at the Gene Pool Garden, said the trees were planted in a degraded area which had very little native biodiversity. The grasslands, the hallmark of the forest range, would not be disturbed by the planting of the trees, she added.

“The 247 hectare area has over 559 species of mostly native flora, including ferns, bamboos, orchids and hydrophytes. The Forest Department also plans to begin conserving native grasses in its green houses soon,” an official said.

The planting of the native trees was done a few days ago. G. Prasad, Forest Range Officer, Nadugani range, was present at the event. The initiative was given a green light by Kommu Omkaram, District Forest Officer, Gudalur range.

Source:<https://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/Coimbatore/couple-gift-native-tree-saplings-to-tropical-gene-pool-garden-in-the-nilgiris/article38352740.ece>