

Creating urban forest with native species for a greener Delhi

20 October 2022

New Delhi, India: Come 2024, Delhi will have one of its largest fully-grown native forests using the Miyawaki plantation technique wherein tree and shrub seedlings are planted densely to replicate the natural composition and layers of a real forest.

The forest will become self-sufficient after 2-3 years of care, making it an ideal greening option for the densely packed city. 35000 saplings from 50+ species will be planted over a 3-acre land at Dwarka Sector 17, Delhi in the next 45 days.

This endeavour is initiated by GlaxoSmithKline Consumer Private Limited, the makers of Otrivin, under its CSR initiative in partnership with Green Yatra. Employees took a stance today to protect the environment by volunteering in the plantation drive to create a carbon sink for the city to breathe cleaner air.

Green Yatra, a leading environmental NGO deployed the Miyawaki technique to grow a forest to boost a bio-diverse habitat in the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD)-owned land, and support Otrivin's 'Actions to Breathe Cleaner' campaign.

In comparison to a conventional plantation method, studies suggest that the Miyawaki technique, pioneered by Japanese botanist Dr Akira Miyawaki, would allow plants to grow faster and denser retaining the nutritional value of the soil. This would enable better carbon-dioxide absorption, noise, and dust reduction.

Speaking on the partnership to create a carbon sink for the city, Shanu Saksena, Head CSR, Haleon (erstwhile GlaxoSmithKline Consumer Healthcare), said, "We understand the deteriorating air quality and rising temperature has significant effect on our planet and our health. The Miyawaki technique is a sustainable method for developing an urban forestry in small areas to reduce air pollution and help people breathe clean. Hence, our endeavour to revive the greener pastures of the city is a solution-driven approach that echoes our purpose to deliver better everyday health with humanity. In times to come, this can also evolve into an ecological research centre for students, birdwatchers, scientists, and nature-lover. My gratitude to my colleagues for volunteering and supporting this initiative."

In this drive, native Aravalli forest species such as Neem, Karvand, Adulsa, Nirgundi, Amla, Kaith, Shemal, Arjun, Ber, Sheesham, Siris, Shivan, Paras, Peepal, Mahua, Umbar et al, will be planted in four-tiers, clustered tightly together using this unique afforestation method. This includes canopy layer, tree layer, sub-tree layer and shrub layer which are planted close to each other so that they only receive sunlight from the top and grow upwards than sideways. The NGO will continue the plantation drive for 45-60 days depending on climate conditions and will maintain the land for next three years. Physical and chemical study and analysis of the soil was conducted to determine the biomass quantity.

Commenting on the collaboration Pradeep Tripathi, Founder- Green Yatra said, "As per United Nations we have less than 8 years to limit climate change catastrophe and we are running short of time to save the environment. Indian mega cities are most affected by climate change because the world's maximum and most polluted and hottest cities are Indian cities. Most Indian metro cities are rapidly losing their green cover, and 50-70% green cover is nonnative which is not good for us and our urban biodiversity and health of people. Therefore, we need a natural and long-lasting solution which can bring exceptional

results in less time and space. Our innovative, fast growing native, natural and organic urban forests are the answer to one of best available solutions to restore balance. We are happy to partner with GlaxoSmithKline Consumer Private Limited, to make Delhi green, pollution free and healthy for all.”

The dual objective of the Miyawaki forests that demonstrate high growth rate and survival rate amongst the afforestation methods, is to provide a biodiversity hotspot to contribute in mitigation of climate change and promote revitalizing through recreation.