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First tree census in Gurugram to be over by December-end

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The forest department in Gurugram said on Thursday that the first tree census in the city, as part of the first state-wide tree census, will be completed by the end of December. The tree census, which started in April this year, will help the department assess both the quality and quantity of tree cover in the district. Forest officials said they used manual and geographic information systems (GIS) to gather tree data such as height, girth, canopy, species and related features.

While the tree census is in its final stages, the department and district administration on Thursday asked city residents and resident welfare associations to support the exercise and share information with the forest officials gathering data about trees on private land.

Both forest department and district administration officials said information about trees on private land was being taken only for data collection and authorities had no plan to stake ownership on such trees.

Rajeev Tejyan, district forest officer, Gurugram, said as many as 150 officials were engaged in the census. "We expect this census work to come to an end next month and after that, a detailed report will be sent to the forest department in Chandigarh based on the data. We are also checking the health of the trees and taking photos with GIS information. This data will help us understand the nature of the green cover in the district, which are the stressed areas and also give us an idea of what kind of trees are more rooted in this vegetation," he said.

The teams have also listed rare and endangered trees and those that are not healthy. The latter shall be recommended for treatment, he added.

During the census, officials noticed that some residents are reluctant to share information as they feel that the forest department could stake claim over these trees. "We would like to reassure them that the only purpose of gathering information is getting data about the green cover in the city over government and private land. The objective is to have a definite idea about the condition of trees, soil cover and based on this, future strategies can be formed to improve tree cover," he said.

Nishant Yadav, deputy commissioner, Gurugram, said the census is being carried out on forest land, panchayat land, institutional land and private land. "City residents must share information about trees without any apprehension and based on this data, future plans to increase green cover are going to be made," Yadav said in a statement on Thursday.

The tree cover in Haryana reduced from 1,565sqkm to 1,425sqkm between October 2019 and February 2020, according to the Forest Survey of India Report.

Tree cover is defined as a green patch that is smaller than one hectare and outside the area marked as a forest.

Source: <https://www.hindustantimes.com/cities/gurugram-news/first-tree-census-in-gurugram-to-be-over-by-decemberend-101669312578398.html>