



Forest department to give farmers teak, mahogany saplings

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CHENNAI: Farmers with land where no crop is being raised, thanks to the raging Covid-19 pandemic, now have a good opportunity to raise trees that have timber value.

Forest department nurseries across the state have raised several such saplings and are ready to distribute them in an effort to provide an alternative source of income to farmers. While saplings provided under a central scheme will be given away for free, those provided under a state scheme will come for Rs 5 each.

Tiruvallur district forest officer G Kiran told TOI that the Centre had under the 'National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture' provided all states with funds to raise species with timber value.

Accordingly, the state horticulture department raised teak, mahogany, red sanders, Prickly Padauk (Vengai in Tamil) among others. These will be given to those interested free along with tips to raise them. Department officials will also help plant them, he said.

Assistant conservator of forests (Tiruvallur) A Gopu said these species had to be raised for at least 30 years.

In Tiruvallur district, about 1.75 lakh saplings are ready for distribution.

Separately, in Chengalpet, one lakh saplings raised in the forest department's nursery, including teak, tamarind, jackfruit, red sanders and mahogany, are ready to be sold for a nominal Rs 5 each.

A senior official said raising saplings on unused agricultural land was promoted under 'Tree Cultivation in Private Lands' taken up as part of the Tamil Nadu Biodiversity and Greening Project. Now it has been handed over to the territorial forest divisions.

In most of the districts, the saplings are ready for distribution. However, due to the Covid-19 threat, the farmers have been unable to visit the nurseries to buy the saplings. Once the lockdown is lifted, farmers will be able to visit the nurseries, choose and buy the saplings from the department.

With the southwest monsoon having set in across the country and Tamil Nadu too experiencing some rain, this is the right time of the year to take up planting, added the official.

Source: <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/chennai/forest-department-to-give-farmers-teak-mahogany-saplings/articleshow/76807409.cms>