

## Forest dept to grow over million saplings to meet annual planting target

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Aiming to increase the green cover of the city, the district forest department has been given a target to raise 13.78 lakh saplings of over 20 species to meet the annual plantation target set by the state government for the year 2020-21.

The state government had last year ordered a massive plantation drive of 10 lakh trees, which about two lakh more than the target the year before that. The plantation drive held last August saw the participation of 26 government departments. Over 7.5 lakh saplings were planted on a single day. This year, the drive is to be held between July 1 and 7, unlike 2019, when the plantation happened on war footing in a single day of August 15.

According to the forest department, to meet the demand this year, they are growing a total of 13.78 lakh saplings in five different forest department nurseries.

"This is the right season and by July or August, all saplings will be ready for plantation. We will grow saplings in five different nurseries in Dadri and Sikandrabad. Last year, we had distributed the saplings free of cost, though we don't have any such order so far this year. The average cost of each sapling is estimated to be ₹3.50," PK Srivastava, divisional forest officer, Gautam Budh Nagar, said.

He added that one forest department nursery has also been proposed to be developed at Botanic garden. The forest department said more emphasis would be given to the indigenous species. A few timber and species of commercial importance will also be distributed in rural areas.

"The main species includes sheesham, kanji, arjun, eucalyptus, jamun, guava, neem, amaltash, mahua, teak, ambla and callistermon or bottle brushes. This will be second planned plantation in the district and it often takes 4-5 years before these trees grow large enough to add to the green cover," Srivastava said.

The forest department will also be geo-tagging saplings to check their growth.

"The target set for 2020-21 is 10,00,956, of which 2,71,360 will be planted by the forest department, three lakh by the Noida authority and one lakh by the Greater Noida authority," Srivastava said.

The Uttar Pradesh government aims to have a total green cover of over 15% (36,146 sq km) of its geographical area by 2021, against the present 12.09% (29,133.5 sq kms).

Currently, the city has a total of 5 sq km of moderately dense forests, (density 70%-40 %), while 15 are open forest (39%-10% density). There is no scrub forest in the city.

Source: <https://www.hindustantimes.com/noida/forest-dept-to-grow-over-million-saplings-to-meet-annual-planting-target/story-UjBTzO3bzj7B78qfO9rTXJ.html>