

# Forest dept to plant 625 trees per hectare with shrubs, herbs for plantation season

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Pune: The forest department's Pune division has decided to plant herbs, shrubs, tall trees and grass on forest land.

Around 625 trees will be planted on every hectare of forest land and 1,100 trees will be planted on degraded land patches. Currently, the department has also entered into a tri-party agreement with five to six groups for conducting the plantation around 700 hectares of forest land for a period of 7 years, an official said.

"We conducted the previous project in various patches of the city on 5 hectares. This was then deemed successful by the head office. Now, they have approved the new plan according to which

we will plant tall trees, bamboos, herbs and shrubs in two phases within a period of three years. We realised that only planting trees will not help, but we need to incorporate everything else as well," said Mahadev Mohite, deputy conservator of forest, Pune division. The new plan was approved in April 2023,

In the 2023 working plan, which extends for a period of 10 years, the department had proposed redevelopment of forest land across Pune division by removing gliricidia trees and planting native indigenous tall trees and bamboo shoots.

The gliricidia trees were planted by the department a few decades ago in order to improve soil quality, considering the nitrogen fixation capability of gliricidia.

Gliricida now prevents further growth of other native trees due to its invasive nature, which is why removal and replantation of native trees was deemed essential.

“In the previous plan, we had a restriction to plant only on 5 hectares, but now with the success of the previous plantation, we have been told to conduct large-scale drives on forest land without any restriction on the land size. We will do it in small phases as we do not want to damage the ecology completely,” said Mohite.

Recently, the department had met with widespread criticism from citizens over removal of gliricida trees from large patches of land. “In order to ensure that we keep citizens informed about what we plan and also be more involved, we are collaborating with multiple groups,” said Mohite.

Now, around 700 hectares of land in Saswad, Vadgaon, Dindori will be redeveloped with 625 trees per hectare.

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