

Haryana: 32.98L saplings of eucalyptus, native species planted in 6 forest divisions using CAMPA funds, says RTI reply

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Most of the native species -- obtained through Compensatory Afforestation Management and Planning Authority (CAMPA) against diverted forest land for other developmental works -- were planted adjoining the national highways, state highways, ridges and other areas.



Maximum eucalyptus trees, which is an exotic species, were planted in Yamunanagar and Kaithal forest division.” (File) A TOTAL of 32.98 lakh saplings of native species such as Shisham, Jamun, Neem, Bakain, Papri, Arjun Bel Patra, Siras and the water-guzzling eucalyptus were planted in six of 21 forest divisions of Haryana over the past decade, says the response to an RTI query filed by The Indian Express.

The six forest divisions include Sonapat, Panipat, Kaithal, Charkhi Dadri, Bhiwani and Yamunanagar. Of around 16.67 lakh plants of the 32.98 lakh were planted in Yamunanagar alone. Yamunanagar and Panchkula forest divisions boast of the highest forest cover in Haryana. Though known for guzzling gallons of water, the exotic Eucalyptus was planted under an agro-forestry scheme on shamlat lands on the request of panchayats.

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Sources said, “The set target of achieving the 33 per cent green cover throughout Haryana is the motive behind the plantation of native species, which have a large canopy. At present, Haryana has 7 per cent green cover of its total geographical area. The plantation pace is very slow compared to other states including Punjab, Himachal etc.” The target

of achieving the 33 per cent green cover for every state/UT was set in the National Forest Policy, 1998. So far, Haryana has managed to achieve 7 per cent of green cover.

According to RTI reply, "A total of 2,35,117 plants were planted in the last one decade in forest division Kaithal, 3,72,466 were planted in Bhiwani, 16,67, 120 were planted in Yamunanagar, 4,88,684 plants were planted in Panipat, 1,54,634 were planted in Charkhi Dadri and 3,80,944 plants were planted in Sonapat. Maximum eucalyptus trees, which is an exotic species, were planted in Yamunanagar and Kaithal forest division." Daizy Rani Batish, chairperson of the department of botany, Panjab University, said, "Plantation of eucalyptus being discouraged in India, but it is not completely banned. In the early years, in the time of the Green Revolution was made, stress was on economically centralised plantation. Later, ecologists observed the side-effects of excessive plantation of single species and started stressing on native species. They recommended plantation of exotic trees in a mixed and clustered manner. There are several medicinal benefits also of the eucalyptus." Principal Chief Conservator of Forest (PCCF) Dr Amarinder Kaur, said, "We are only stressing on the plantation of eucalyptus in places prone to water-logging. When village panchayats request us to plant this exotic tree species on their common land for economic benefits, we plant the sapling of this tree. Generally, we are stressing on native tree species throughout Haryana. Though eucalyptus saplings were planted throughout Haryana, reply to the RTI received from at least half of dozen forest divisions of Haryana revealed that approximately 40-50,000 eucalyptus and clon eucalyptus plants were planted in Yamunanagar, Rewari, Kaithal, Sonapat and Charkhi Dadri.

Source: <https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/chandigarh/32-98l-saplins-of-eucalyptus-native-species-planted-in-6-forest-divisions-using-campa-funds-says-rti-reply-6511701/>