

Printed from

**THE TIMES OF INDIA**

---

# Haryana kicks off its first tree count, to take 1 yr

Apr 26, 2022, 03.07 AM IST

Gurgaon: The forest department kicked off the much-awaited tree census in Haryana on Monday. The first such initiative in the state will record the different species of trees and the status of their health using manual and GIS (Geographic Information System) methods.

Over 150 people, including surveyors, taxonomists and technical staffers, will be working for a year to complete the project, which is estimated to cost approximately Rs 1 crore.

The survey will help create a database of each species, their population and the hazardous issues facing them, and find ways to ensure their protection.

“Teams will record the height, girth, canopy, diameter, stress, flowering, fruiting season, name and distribution frequency of trees, and observe their health and stress factors. The data will help understand the various species and their population, help restore the lost green cover and calculate the carbon sink capacity,” said Vinod Kumar, the additional principal chief conservator of forests. The teams will also list rare trees whenever identified, and the forest department will take all measures to protect them. “The unhealthy ones should undergo pest treatment,” Kumar said.

The efforts, he added, would also help understand the land use and the quality of soil and the environmental conditions required for a species to grow in a particular area.

The eventual focus would be on preserving the traditional and local knowledge of flora and fauna.

The other focus would be on conserving grassland ecosystems in southern parts of the state and recording the endangered and rare species of plants that grow in the Aravalis.

The census is crucial in the wake of the Forest Survey of India's (FSI) report that the tree cover in the state reduced from 1,565sqkm to 1,425sqkm between October 2019 and February 2020.

Tree cover, different from forests, is defined as green patches that are less than 1 hectare in size and are outside the areas marked as forests.

Environmentalists appreciated the move as it may help save trees from encroachment and felling. "The exercise is important to identify the flora in the area and develop a conservation plan, accordingly," said Vaishali Rana Chandra, an environmentalist. Activists, however, sought stringent laws against tree felling.