

# In Belagavi, forest dept gears up to plant 15 lakh saplings

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Belagavi: This monsoon season, the forest department plans to plant 15 lakh saplings in Belagavi. The forest department has prepared hundreds of species of saplings under various projects for planting and nurturing in Belagavi and Gokak divisions as the monsoon approaches rapidly. Thousands of saplings have been prepared in each nursery of the department for this purpose.

The saplings are being distributed under the MGNREGA scheme by the social forestry department.

Plantating of saplings is being done in hilly areas and roadsides where encroachment has been cleared and thousands of saplings have already been planted in the area covered by the Cantonment

of Belagavi.

In other places, preparations are being made to plant saplings by the end of June. The management boards of Educational institutions are encouraging students to grow saplings around schools and college premises.

More than sixty species including sandalwood, mango, bamboo, fig, poppy, jambu, purple teak, wild almond, custard apple, jackfruit, and wild plantain are available in the Forest Department's nurseries.

Deputy commissioner Nitesh Patil also joined the environment-conservation programme by distributing saplings to environment lovers, children and common citizens during the Environment Day celebrations held on June 5.

The scheme for farmers: Under the Agriculture Forestry Scheme, if the farmers get various plants and plant them on their lands, the department will give incentives. Sandalwood, cashews, teak and other plants are being distributed under this project.

The rate of the saplings ranges from Rs 3 to 23 depending on the size. If the farmers plant and nurture saplings on their lands, the department will give Rs 125 per sapling for three years.

The forest department officials said that the farmers can get the saplings by providing a copy of the Pahani of the farm, an Aadhaar card and two photographs.

A total of 12.9 lakh saplings in the Belagavi division and more than 3 lakh have been raised in the nurseries of the Gokak Division.

Belagavi deputy conservator of forests SK Kallolkar said that farmers, public and organisations are being encouraged to actively participate in afforestation programs under various schemes. The public should join hands with the forest department to grow plants, he added.

Mashnu, a farmer from Agasaga village of Belagavi taluk said that the love for the environment and awareness about the environment should not be limited only to June. It should be extended throughout our lives.

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