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## More than 900 trees in Thane city identified as heritage trees

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The Thane Municipal Corporation (TMC) tree authority has identified over 900 heritage trees across the city for the first time in its tree census report. This has been done after a long-standing demand from tree lovers in the city to identify the heritage trees.

Out of these heritage trees, 729 are of the native species while 180 are exotic. All these trees are over 50 years old. Experts, however, claim that merely identifying them is not enough. The list of trees needs to be approved at the State level to protect the trees.

Some of the popular heritage trees in the survey include banyan, peepal, fig, cluster figs, coconut, mango, bottle palm, rain tree, tamarind and jamun trees.

TMC has conducted a tree census recently wherein the total tree count of the city is 7,22,426.

An officer from TMC's tree department said, "The State had issued a Government Resolution (GR) in June 2019 to identify trees that are older than 50 years and protect them. Accordingly, we have identified 909 heritage trees across the city in the census. A selection criterion was set based on the guidelines of the World Heritage Convention and UNESCO. Now that we have taken the first step towards identification of the trees, we will survey them and take measures, if needed, in some cases to strengthen their roots or protect them."

As per the guidelines, the trees should be over 50 years old, belong to important native species, should have some cultural significance, species that fall under rare, endangered and threatened category, species that has some ecological importance like being confined to a special habitat and difficult to grow, a large tree that is irreplaceable, important forest species or is a part of history or symbolic of an historic event.

Suresh Surve, the chairman of the TMC committee, said, "We also have our own set of policies to decide which trees are to be tagged as heritage. This is merely the list for the census. Once a tree is declared heritage by the committee, it cannot be cut. So, the TMC will have to finalise for our committee a list of such trees that need protection and conservation. This list will then be approved by the State and then the tree can be protected."

Source: <https://www.hindustantimes.com/cities/mumbai-news/more-than-900-trees-in-thane-city-identified-as-heritage-trees-101649339158559.html>