

**News on the DIGITAL Observance of International Day of Forests 2020
by IFGTB ENVIS**

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TN among top five states in tree diversity ranking in the country

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

@ Coimbatore

THE Institute of Forest Genetics and Tree Breeding marked the International Day of Forests digitally, by hosting the event on Facebook live on Friday. The rationale was to avoid a public gathering in the wake of the coronavirus outbreak in the country.

The event saw the release of an awareness poster, highlighting the theme "Forests and Biodiversity". This was in tune with the green and digital drives, with soft copies of the poster and handouts getting transmitted electronically to various organizations. Hard copies would be distributed to schoolchildren in and around Coimbatore soon.

Meanwhile, speaking during the event, Senior Principal Scientist and ENVIS (Environment Information System) Coordinator at the Institute of Forest Genetics and Tree Breeding (IFGTB) Kannan C S Warriar said that the four southern states — Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Kerala and Andhra Pradesh — and the eastern Odisha secured the top-five ranks in the country in terms of tree/plant diversity.

Kannan said that during a rapid assessment of biodiversity in 2018-2019 spread over 8,500 sample plots across the country, the Forest Survey of India reported 3,794 species of trees in Indian forests; Karnataka is home to 325, Tamil

Nadu to 252, Andhra Pradesh to 242, Kerala to 238 and Odisha to 192 species. Madhya Pradesh, with the largest forest cover in the country, is home to 146 tree species.

"International Day of Forests is an important platform for dissemination of information on how forests can be conserved and sustainably utilized. Assessment of biodiversity in forests is important, since it provides an indicator to represent the state of conservation of forest ecosystems," he said.

Director of IFGTB S Murugesan, in his inaugural address, explained the importance of forests and their role in balancing the ecosystem.

