

Tamil Nadu: Man on a green mission plants 2,500 trees in six years

20 January 2020

MADURAI: V Ukkrapandi, 45, from Thankkankulam village on the city outskirts has planted and nurtured 2,500 trees in the last six years. He was 39 years old when he started planting trees in and around his village by organizing teams of students and youngsters. Ukkrapandi, who runs a jewellery pawn shop, does not just plant saplings and leave them. For him, it is important to tend to every single sapling planted until the stage where it can survive on its own.

"I plant saplings, which are at least eight-foot-high and are produced in my own nursery. I spend a few hours in the mornings and evenings to tend the saplings and water them," he said.

He said that he even chooses tree varieties according to the location. Neem for roadside, peepal and banyan for empty spaces near temples, jamun trees in vacant lands and flowering trees near houses since there is a misconception that roots of bigger tree varieties will damage the property.

Initially, Ukkrapandi watered trees by carrying pots on cycle. On observing his dedication, a Lions Club came forward to buy him a light commercial vehicle. He used to plant saplings only once or twice in a year and spent the remaining time taking care of them. He also made sure to set aside 15% of his yearly income towards planting trees.

He has now taken up work to plant 10,000 trees on 70 acres' land in Kappalur Sidco industrial estate along with activists, industrialists, government officials and locals and has already planted 400 saplings in 6.5 acres so far.

Meanwhile, a private company employee, G Manivannan, 33, from Kalainagar in Madurai, is focusing on increasing green cover in rural areas. He has mobilized a group of people from Vandapuli village to start a movement called 'Vanathukkul Vandapuli' and has planted more than 150 trees in a few villages.

He along with green activists C P Ravi and Durai Vijayapandian have now launched 'Olirum Madurai', an organization to promote green cover and to help students in need of financial support to continue education.

"We three had successfully convinced authorities from the district rural development agency to provide manpower from MNREGA to plant and maintain trees in Miyawaki method. As a result, three Miyawaki forests have been created in the last three months," said Manivannan.

Source: <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/madurai/this-man-on-a-green-mission-has-planted-2-5k-trees-in-6-yrs/articleshow/73397053.cms>