

Tirunelveli's treeman on a green campaign

TOI

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Love trees, but don't want to go through the effort of planting one? No worries, P Subburaj will do the job for you if you live in and around Ambasamudram in Tirunelveli district. What you need to do is to give him a call, and he will be at your place the next day. Subburaj will first check the spot where the sapling is going to be planted. Once the sapling is planted, he will give you tips on how to maintain it.

Subburaj has planted more than 8,000 saplings since 2015, but only about 1,000 have grown up into large trees. No regrets, as 1,000 is a big number. A tree a day, that's his maxim, which he attributes to Sangam literature. "People at times don't show any interest. They will allow me to plant saplings on their premises, and then they forget. If they had taken care of the saplings, they all would have grown by now. But I think at least 1,000 grew up without any trouble, that's a great number," said Subburaj, who works as an insurance agent in Ambasamudram.

He had developed a strong bondage with nature as a child. Subburaj first collects saplings from suppliers and then let them grow up to four to five feet inside his tent. He then goes to the houses of people, and plants them. The idea of this 34-year-old is to plant as many trees as possible, especially trees like poovarasu (*thespesia populnea*), jamun (*syzygium cumini*), soargam (*simarouba glauca*) and vempu (*azadirachta indica*). "I



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used to go up to Tirunelveli and plant saplings. It was difficult for me to cover a huge area alone. Now, I focus on in and around Ambasamudram, so that I can check the progress of the saplings that I have planted," he said.

Subburaj's Pasumai Thozhargal Trust has a small office at Ambasamudram, from where he operates several environmental awareness programmes and workshops. He even goes to schools to conduct workshops for students. "The role of students is important when it comes to conservation of trees. I go to schools and distribute saplings to students. The drives get tremendous response as students are interested in trees," he said.