

To increase green cover, Haryana forest dept deploys seed broadcasting in tough, hilly terrain

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Seeds were sprinkled in the hilly terrain of a remote village, Jhanda, in Sadhura sub-division of Yamunanagar district.

IN AN attempt to reach tough, untouched terrain to plant native species in order to increase the green cover of the state, the Haryana forest and wildlife department has shifted from its method of seed sowing to seed broadcasting through specially designed drones.

A hundred hectares of forest land was identified for seed broadcasting through drones in the forest areas of Shiwalik Hills adjoining Panchkula, Yamunanagar and Arawali Hills in Gurugaon. The private company was hired through the tender process, Rs 5,000 was fixed for seed broadcasting per hectare — the total cost amounting to around Rs 5 lakh. As monsoon is the best time for seeding, broadcasting of seeds of native species of trees started last Friday. Seeds were sprinkled in the hilly terrain of a remote village, Jhanda, in Sadhura sub-division of Yamunanagar district.

“It is the first time when we adopted the new method. Seed sowing in the traditional manner on the hill tops, tough terrains, ridges is a costly affair. This method involves digging up the earth, lifting of seeds, plants from the ground to hill top. It required a lot of manpower. In the seed broadcasting, seeds pellets were sprinkled in a particular area. These seed pellets were prepared well in advance. Seeds of different species are covered in mud, small pieces of paddy waste, hence these can be easily submerge in the soil automatically. We held a small trial in the early months of this year in Morni Hills. The results were encouraging. Now, we adopted it fully,” Divisional Forest Officer (DFO), (Seed), Pawan Sharma, told The Indian Express.

Haryana has 3.59 per cent forest cover of its geographical area and the tree cover of the state is 2.90 per cent of the total geographical area. Combined, the forest and tree cover of the state is around 6.49 percent, as per the Indian State of Forest Report, FSI, 2013. In 2019, the Forest Survey of India latest report stated that minimal tree cover, which was only 1 per cent will increase last year. Every state/UT is required to ideally achieve the task of 33 per cent green cover of the total geographical area of the state/UT.

Dr Amarinder Kaur, principal chief conservator of forest, said, “We have completed seeding through drones and seed broadcasting technique, achieving the target of green cover and plantation in less time. We are committed to increasing the green cover of the state, hence adopting new techniques. The company hired for seed broadcasting was given a fixed task. Recently, we have started using geospatial technology to map forest boundaries as well.

A hundred hectares areas included part of Shiwalik Hills cover Panchkula-Morni hills, Kalesar National Park, Yamunanagar and certain parts of Gurugaon falling in Aravali Hills. The process of seeding through drones is being used in the typically hilly states including Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand and in North-East.

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