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BangaloreMirror

'Tree'nity to save the day

Bangalore Mirror Bureau / Apr 24, 2022, 06.00 AM IST



Some trees in the city have deeper cuts. Spotted on Mosque Road, in Fraser Town, is this tree with a railing, installed by a civic agency alongside a pavement, piercing into its trunk

By Garima Prasher

MCC students, NGOs join hands to rid trees of nails, pegs, flexes on April 25

Students of Mount Carmel College (MCC) and volunteers of Vruksha Foundation and Citizens 4 Citizens (C4C) have joined hands to remove pegs, pins and metal wires used to fix banners and other materials on the trees in the city. More than 100 students from MCC will be participating in this.

According to Dr Rajani Kora, coordinator, Institutional Social Responsibility Cell, MCC, the trees in the city have been reduced to agents for advertisement, and many are damaged due to the foreign materials nailed on or drilled into them.

“Students from the Department of Botany, Institute of Social Responsibility Cell, will form groups and cover the stretches from the college (Palace Road) to Millers Road and the Cantonment Railway Station. They will remove posters, banners and nails from the trees and create awareness...” said Dr Kora.

A total distance of eight kilometres will be covered under the campaign.

A few months ago, Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) launched its ‘Nail-free Tree’ campaign to rid trees of pegs and metal wires. According to volunteers, while the Palike has sent out stern messages regarding the issue several times, trees all over the city are still being abused with pinned banners and nailed posters.

“BBMP has issued several notices. The campaign will be complimenting a recent public notice by BBMP which highlighted the abuse of trees as a punishable offence under the Karnataka Tree Preservation Act, 1976. We want to rid trees of foreign objects and create awareness about the issue. It is important to involve the youth in such activities as they are going to be our future custodians,” said Rajkumar Dugar, founder, C4C.

The area to be covered will be divided into four zones and a team of 25 students in each zone will educate the public on the issue while freeing the trees from the harmful metal pieces and banners. The volunteers will be carrying small tools to pull out nails and metal wires drilled into the tree trunks. The students will also apply Neem oil to the trunks to provide protection to the trees from any infection.

Although damaging trees in Bengaluru has been deemed a criminal offence, people continue to defy the law. This is a major issue in urban areas

–Vijay Nishant, founder, Vruksha Foundation

It may be noted that according to the Bengaluru Municipal Act and the Tree Preservation Act it is illegal to fix any publicity materials on trees or drill nails into tree trunks.

Vijay Nishant, founder of Vruksha Foundation said that while the NGO has been conducting such events for over a decade, people continue to damage the trees.

“Drilling nails into trees can cause injuries that might lead to death. Nails and pins obstruct their supply of water... Although damaging trees in Bengaluru has been deemed a criminal offence, people continue to defy the law. This is a major issue in urban areas,” said Nishant.