

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

A verdant mini-forest in Thiruvananthapuram in just 16 months



S. Anil Radhakrishnan

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, MAY 18, 2020 19:11 IST

Trees planted as per Miyawaki method of afforestation show considerable growth

Five cents on the Kanakakkunnu Palace premises where the Miyawaki method of afforestation has been replicated has transformed into a luxurious mini-forest in just 16 months.

Many of the 420 saplings belonging to 200 species planted on January 2, 2019 have grown considerably tall. The tallest is *Ceiba pentandra* (tree cotton) which stands over 31 ft. Many trees have begun fruiting much ahead of their normal period.

The forest has started attracting many birds too. The yellow-eyed Oriental Scops owl, which is not sighted in the urban landscape usually, has come calling at the mini-forest.

Over 20 insect varieties have been spotted in the forest that has creepers, subtrees, shrubs and trees.

Botanists attribute the fast-paced growth to the method of planting that makes it necessary for the plants to compete for sunlight. Also, when humidity is high, the growth will increase. The rapid growth comes at a time when the Miyawaki method of afforestation is being adopted across the State.

Self sustaining

“This plot has shown us how it can sustain itself with minimum human intervention. Natural forests sustain themselves and that can be seen here too,” says Mathew Dan, scientist, Jawaharlal Nehru Tropical Botanic Garden and Research Institute (JNTBGRI), who has been guiding and observing the Miyawaki model of afforestation. “Some trees have reached a height of over 30 feet, which means 2 ft a month on an average. This is a unique record even in Miyawaki model afforestation,” says city-based nature lover M.R. Hari, who spearheaded the initiative in the capital.

The project was taken up by the NGO Nature’s Green Guardians Foundation (NGGF) and is sponsored by Invis Multimedia, the ICT solution provider of Kerala Tourism. The afforestation work was done by Culture Shoppe. Environmentalist and chairman of the NGGF V.K. Damodaran says they never expected such a growth.