

# Thiruvananthapuram micro-forest project: Patch set to turn into forestland in three years

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Tourism Minister Kadakampally Surendran planting a sapling in the micro-forest developed by Kerala Tourism in the city of Vincent Pulickal

By Express News Service

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: At five feet, the cotton plant stands cheek by jowl with countless other native trees, all just 60 days old. Around 800 saplings stand in good stead, swathing a five cent patch in the Kanakakunnu Palace grounds in a green glory.

Two months ago, it was a dry, empty patch. Now, in stark contrast to the rest of the land, a verdant patch has developed here, and plants of myriad varieties inhabit the area. In three years, this patch is set to turn into forestland.

The micro-forest is being developed by following the Akira Miyawaki model of afforestation and is being set up by Kerala Tourism.

Tourism Minister Kadakampally Surendran inaugurated the project by planting a sapling in the micro-forest patch. "Across the world, we are facing the challenges of climate change. The question currently confounding climate scientists across is on how we can surmount this crisis. It is widely agreed that the Miyawaki model of afforestation is an ideal way of overcoming this. The idea is to implement this in our state and thereby stave off the adverse impacts of climate change," said Kadakampally Surendran while inaugurating the programme. "friendly tourism practices," he added.

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"This is our pilot project to preserving the environment. When the idea was first pitched, we understood that it can send a good message to the public. We earmarked the five cent plot for this and in three years we can build this forest here. This is the new project of Tourism department and this environmental friendly project can be emulated by others as well," said Tourism Secretary Rani George.

The patch comprises a mix of creepers, subtrees, shrubs, trees, and emergent trees, with trees capable of growing to colossal heights being planted. As many as 100 species of plants are growing in this small patch.

"In three years, some of the trees will reach up to 30 ft height. By then, the patch will be so dense that you won't be even able to enter it," says Hari MR, managing director, Invis Multimedia.

"We will have to give due care, like watering the plants and picking out the weeds till July. After that, it will grow well, and constant watering isn't needed. Moreover, in this technique of planting, the water holding capacity and the water retention capacity of the soil is high," he says. "This model of afforestation is feasible even if you have 1000 sq ft of space and we can accommodate 300 to 400 trees in that!. This has even scope for being developed as a unique tourism product," he adds.

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