

## **Miyawaki forest comes up in Kollam**

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### **K-DISC to conduct an environmental impact study on the afforestation programme**

With miniature urban forests taking roots in 12 locations across the State, the Kerala Development and Innovative Strategic Council (K-DISC) has completed the first one of its Miyawaki afforestation programme.

While some districts have already developed dense biodiverse woodlands, small green islands of varying sizes are flourishing bit by bit in some other spots.

“We have completed the first stage and now we are planning to conduct an environmental impact study to assess difference in various parameters, including air quality. The study will be conducted in all sites after one year,” says K.T. Shakeela, assistant programme manager, K-DISC.

Among the 14 districts, Wayanad, Idukki, Pathanamthitta and Kottayam were excluded while Ernakulam and Thrissur have two sites each. “Districts such as Wayanad and Idukki were not considered since they have a comparatively larger green cover,” she adds.

### **Planting process**

Though the project took off by 2019 end, the planting process in all districts was completed only recently.

“As on now, we have one-and-a-half-year-old micro-forests to healthy 3-month-old patches. The project got delayed due to COVID-19, but now the planting has been completed. But they need regular nurturing and grooming till the three-year incubation period is over,” says Hari Prabhakaran, director and CEO, Nature’s Green Guardian Foundation (NGGfn), implementing agency of the project.

The Munakkal beach in Thrissur, Andalurkavu in Kannur, Bhatt Road in Kozhikode and the Asramam biodiversity heritage site in Kollam are some of the locations where the project is being implemented.

A method popularised by Japanese botanist Akira Miyawaki, the fast-growing native vegetations are expected to become self-sustaining ecosystems after a particular time frame. Cultivated using organic methods, the saplings grow tall and thick, generating a lush habitat for pollinators, including butterflies and bees.

“If we don't choose the indigenous species, their growth will deteriorate and we always add fruit-bearing trees to attract birds and insects. You can't replicate the same forest in all sites and we have included some rare varieties. We started the project in consultation with Mr. Miyawaki and two of his team members had visited all our sites,” he adds.

Apart from removing carbon footprints and improving terrestrial biodiversity, the project also aims to encourage ecotourism.

### **Tourism potential**

“The project has great tourism potential as it develops natural woodlands inside urban pockets. We are recreating the serenity of forests in an urban area and it will definitely attract tourists and nature enthusiasts,” he adds.

Source: <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/kerala/miyawaki-forest-comes-up-in-kollam/article35303049.ece>