

**Udupi: Forest department to plant fruit bearing plants minimise animal menace**

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**Udupi, Apr 27:** The menace of the wild animals visiting the civilised society in search of food and inflicting losses on the farmers has put the farmers in an unenviable position. The forest department has planned to handle this issue. It has been decided to grow fruit bearing plants in 241 acres of forest land in the district.

As animals have been destroying the crops grown by the farmers time and again, many farmers have stopped growing horticultural crops. As the forest department has to disburse compensation for the loss of crops because of wild animals, the department wants to save money by raising fruit bearing plants inside the forest towards providing food to the wild animals there. The plants that are locally grown, are being raised inside the forests.



For this purpose, villages like Kalthodu in Byndoor range, Hosangady and Karkunje in Shankaranarayana range, Perdoor in Hebri range, and Haluvalli villages have been chosen in the first phase for this purpose, Jackfruit trees, guava, mango, kokum, custard apple, jamun and other fruit plants are grown. The crops are not sold and will be entirely reserved for the consumption of animals and birds.

In addition to growing the plants inside the forest, plants are also distributed among the interested farmers at a concessional rate. The growers will be given Rs 125 for the first three years to take care of the plants. Already plants have been distributed under the Krishi Aranya Protsaha Yojana in different ranges in the district. During the last two years, 563 farmers have been handed over 1.23 lac plants for the purpose from all the ranges in the district.

Divisional forest officer of Kundapur, Ashish Reddy, confirmed that fruit plants are being grown to avoid the problem of wild animals coming to villages in search of food. He said that in about 241 hectares out of 311 hectares of forest, fruit plants will be raised.

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