

A Step-By-Step Guide To Correct Plantation Method For A Greener, Healthier Future

WHAT TO PLANT, WHERE TO PLANT



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Rains renew enthusiasm to plant trees and people set out looking for open spaces to plant them green. However, several plantation drives fail because the vigour to grow doesn't match the required knowledge of plant species, location and timing of plantation. To ensure our effort doesn't go waste, it is imperative to know the right techniques of plantation.

WHAT TO PLANT?

Every tree gives oxygen, but some trees give more value in terms of their ecological services. For example, if you want a car with high performance, you need to buy one with high CC. Climate change is changing our Earth faster than we could imagine. So, for best results we need the best car... ah tree.

"Natives are plants that have been in existence in a given geography for thousands of years and have co-evolved with animals and the surrounding," says Manasi Karandikar, co-founder of Oikos, an organization which has done ecological restoration in more than 200 acres of land across the country.

A plant suitable for high rainfall zone of Sahyadris, like Tamhan or Kadamb, may not give best results in Vidarbha. In contrast, Hivar or Anjan may grow very well in dry regions of Aurangabad and Amravati with very less maintenance. "The energy to plant trees fades as the dry season nears. Plants need care for at least 2-3 years. So, prefer those that need less care," said Prachi Mahurkar, who has been conserving native seeds in central India for years.

Plants can be selected based on their ability to: give shade, bear attractive flowers, medicinal value, fruit bearing capacity, uniqueness, nitrogen fixing and ability to support a large number of birds, just like tamarind or peepal. (refer to box)

MONSOON IS HERE

Illustration: Shreyas Bedare

1 IDEAL PIT SIZE

Dig manually with a spade and not JCB because pits deeper than 2 feet become difficult to refill with manure and soil at the time of plantation



2 PROTECT THE SOIL

Mulching is covering soil around the plant with natural or artificial material. Natural mulch is provided by dry leaves. Mulching protects the soil from direct rain which can cause soil erosion. In the dry season, mulch retains soil moisture and helps in the growth of helpful micro-organisms that assist plant growth.

WE NEED TREES BECAUSE THEY...

- Positively change micro-climate
- Reduce temperature
- Increase water droplets in air by way of evapo-transpiration
- Conserve biodiversity
- Provide habitat and food for all
- Increase soil fertility

3 PLANT TO PLANT DISTANCE

AVENUE PLANTATION
(roadside) --
Ideal distance
5 to 7 metres

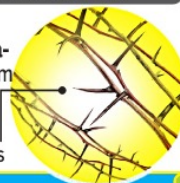
INSTITUTIONAL PLANTATION
(closed spaces
5 to 10 acres)
3 to 5 metres



Don't plant saplings of same age at one go. Stagger them. A land with plants, small and big, mimics a jungle – resilient, varied and capable of mitigating climate change

4 PROTECTION FROM GRAZERS

Natural hedge, like thorny branches of ber, hivar or babool, save young plants from grazing animals. Or, go for box/mesh fences
Optional: Babul, Acacia Spines



Ideal species for avenue plantation

Sonchafa, Shirish, Char, Bahava, Sesam, Karanj, Anjan, Peepal, Ritha, Hedua, Kate Savar, Palas, Kinnai, Tiwas, Shindi, Beeja, Kusum, Kadamb, Rohan, Dikemali

Ideal species for institutional plantation

Bhind, Beheda, Jambhul, Patal, Chinchu, Bibba, Bhira, Raktchandan, Bartondi, Mango, Kunku, Kavita, Bel, Kinnai, Khirni, Vaval, Kakad, Tendu, Ber, Moi

(For more plant names, refer to publication section of oikos.in and booklet "Punarnava- Native Tree Species of Central India.")

For conservation and biodiversity purpose, strictly go for native plants. For avenue plantation, an occasional non-native plant like gulmohar or acacia might do, says Karandikar.

WHERE TO PLANT?

It is important to know the soil strata. "A rocky terrain or murum land may be suitable for neem, shivan or palash, but such a land should ideally be restored at least for

a year before plantation. Any tree can be planted in fertile soil," said Karandikar. A place where water stagnates is ideal for Arjun but not for mahua or other trees.

In case of roadside plantation, plant at the end of the shoulder (emergency stopping lane) or your hard work may go in vain during road widening.

Broadly, plantation drive can be classified into avenue

or roadside, institutional and mass plantations. (See box)

WHEN TO PLANT?

In Vidarbha and Marathwada, any season is good provided water is available all through the year. However, it is better to avoid the activity when it's raining cats and dogs and wait till it slows down or stops.

HOW TO PLANT?

There is a tendency to lev-

SUNDAY SPECIAL