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Kerala

# Kerala Tourism to plant micro-forests in 12 districts in Kerala

*Over 30,000 saplings will be planted across the 12 districts by the end of the year*



Miyawaki forest at Kanakakkunnu Palace Special arrangement

**Liza George**

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Minister for Tourism Kadakampally Surendran inaugurated the Miyawaki method of afforestation to create 22 micro-forests at 12 tourist destinations in Kerala at a State-level event at the Shanghumugham Beach in Thiruvananthapuram yesterday. Over 30,000 saplings are expected to be planted by the end of the year across select locations as part of the green initiative by Kerala Tourism.

“Not only will the project be a way to address the rising concern of global warming; the lush greenery will also attract tourism to the State,” says Santhosh Lal, Deputy Director of the

Kerala State Department of Tourism to The NationWide.

As of now, two micro forests are being planned in 10 districts and one each in Thiruvananthapuram and Pathanamthitta covering 10 cents. "Wayanad and Idukki have not been included in the list as they have sufficient forest coverage," says Santhosh Lal.

Shanghumugham has been identified as the spot for the planting of the micro-forest in Thiruvananthapuram. Although 1,600 plants are to be planted there as part of the afforestation, only 10 to 15 saplings were planted yesterday. The rest will be planted next week.

According to MR Hari, Managing Director of Invis Multimedia, the nature of the forest will be decided based on the location of the micro-forest. "For instance, in a place like Shanghumugham, plants such as Wild Cinnamon, Arjun Terminalia, Indian Laurel, Malabar Tamarind and Burflower tree will grow best," says Hari.

A consortium of Culture Shoppe Pvt Ltd, Invis Multimedia and The Nature's Green Guardian Foundation have bagged the work of planting and caring of the Miyawaki forests through e-bidding.

A successful technique pioneered by Japanese botanist Akira Miyawaki, the Miyawaki method is adopted by governments and nature lovers across the globe to increase green cover in both urban and semi-urban areas.

Last year, the Miyawaki method of afforestation was replicated on five cents at Kanakakkunnu Palace, Thiruvananthapuram. The forest at Kanakakkunnu gave prominence to herbal plants. "In this age of rising pollution and concrete jungles, concerns for a green cover and a green lung brought about the initiative. Planting such forests are also a great way to encourage tourists to explore the natural vegetation of Kerala," says Hari, a nature lover and a propagator of the Miyawaki micro forest for the past few years. He has converted his two acre plot in the suburbs into a mini forest.

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