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# Thiruvananthapuram to have state's first Miyawaki model urban forest

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Thiruvananthapuram: The state will have its first Miyawaki model 'urban forest' in the capital city. A multi-layered forest with trees, bushes and creepers, spread over five cents near Sooryakanthi Auditorium on Kanakakunnu Palace premises, will be a reality in three years from now.

The state tourism department has shown green flag for a proposal from Nature's Green Guardian Foundation, a non-governmental organization (NGO) headed by environmentalist V K Damodaran in this regard.

Sponsored by Invis Multimedia, the department's IT solution provider, the project has been under consideration for the past several months. The state government had directed all departments to identify land for

growing miniature forests in urban areas using the method of afforestation introduced by Japanese botanist Akira Miyawaki, which has been successfully implemented in different parts of the world for more than four decades.

Around 800 to 1,000 indigenous medicinal trees and plant saplings (of around 150 species) will be planted in the first week of December. It will be primarily a medicinal forest with banyan trees, fig, ashoka, koovalam (wood apple), palakappayyaani malaveppu elanji (west Indian medlar), kanjiram (Nux vomica), karingali (cutch), nenmeni vaka (east Indian Walnut) poovarashu or sheelanthi (portia tree), punna (alexandrian laurel), chamatha or plashu (flame of the forest), kadukkai (harithaki), marotti (chaulmoogra), nelli (amla) and veppu (neem).

Based on its success, the tourism department would identify spots across the state to grow similar urban forests, said an official. A 10-15-year-old forest grown using Miyawaki method will have the characteristics of a 150-year-old forest. The initial result will be visible within 12 months. Also, no maintenance is required after three years, and the growth rate is very high.

As per the Miyawaki method, one can develop a complete natural forest in an area as small as 100sqm and there is no ceiling on the upper limits.

The advantages of the method, according to the proposal, are 10 times fast growth rate and 30 times higher density that allows a greater quantity of carbon dioxide to be absorbed. Also, the biodiversity within the forests would be 100 times higher, thanks to the high density of vegetation that does not allow people to access the forest. The capital district already has a successful Miyawaki model vegetation on a private land at Puliarakonam, which is now 9-months-old and is already documented by directorate of environment and climate change.