

# Tree growers mela begins in Coimbatore



Farmers view different breeds of sugarcane kept on display at a stall in the Tree Growers Mela at the IFGBT premises. —DC

DC CORRESPONDENT  
COIMBATORE, FEB. 21

The Institute of Forest Genetics and Tree Breeding (IFGBT) has been researching to develop clones of 15 new varieties of trees.

"Clones of eucalyptus and casuarina, which were developed a few years ago, has found its way into markets across India and have been received well. Another 15 new varieties of clones will be released in the next two years," said Mr N. Krishnakumar, director of IFGTB at the two-day Tree Growers Mela here.

Mr Krishnakumar said that of the 28,000 different varieties of trees, 145 had economic potential. "So there is a need to domesticate them for the benefit of farmers," he added.

Pointing out that econom-

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— N. Krishnakumar  
Director, IFGBT

ic growth had its impact on natural resources, District Collector M. Karunakaran said. "There is a growing concern over tackling the garbage problem, plastic waste management and pollution of water sources.

The impact of urbanization is a major concern which needs immediate attention to preserve the ever-depleting forest wealth. There should be more awareness on protecting our natural resources," he said.

Mr Karunakaran said that as part of the afforestation drive, 64 lakh trees had been planted last year and 65 lakh would be planted this year. The collector also inaugurated an exhibition, which had stalls displaying various forest produces and saplings.

Earlier, Director General of ICFRE Mr V.K. Bahuguna unveiled the silver jubilee year commemorative stone of the IFGBT. Around 1000 farmers from Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Puducherry took part in the two-day Tree Growers Mela.

## 30 Van Vigyan Kendras in TN

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**Exchange of agri practice**

The Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education (ICFRE) will reach out to farmers by setting up Van Vigyan Kendras (VVKs) in 30 districts of Tamil Nadu.

"Scientists who network through these extension centres will strive towards improving the quality of farm production, develop high yielding plants and provide better technology to farmers. The VVKs will work on a similar pattern of Krishi Vigyan Kendras," said Mr V.K. Bahuguna, Director General of ICFRE during the inaugural function of Tree Growers Mela 2013 at the Institute of Forest Genetics and Tree Breeding in Coimbatore on Thursday.

Mr Bahuguna added that ICFRE would establish three high-quality seedling producing centres in Puducherry, TN and Kerala at a cost of ₹60 lakh. "To improve livelihood of the artisans, the ICFRE is also setting up 'Prerna Shops' in Tamil Nadu to sell eco-friendly produce as part of the 'Direct to Consumer scheme.' A similar shop, which is already in existence at Dehradun has been successful," he said.

The ICFRE is also planning to commercialise

A team of 11 farmers led by a scientist will be taken on a three-week tour to different parts of the country to adopt and exchange various agricultural practice adopted in other places

bio fertilisers and bio boosters (used for quick growth of plants) among the farmers at a project estimate of ₹25 lakh. Kissan Mela's would also be organised for the benefit to farmers.

Mr Bahuguna said that a research was underway on forest biodiversity taking into consideration different factors like climate change and hydrology. "Such a pan-India study is quintessential at a time when climate change is having drastic effects on the forests. The last study was done in 1968," he said. On its part, the IFGBT has already done a study on the forests of TN, Kerala and Andaman and submitted its results to the ICFRE. On increasing the forest cover to 33 per cent from its current 23 per cent, Mr Bahuguna said that farmers were being encouraged to grow trees in their lands.

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