Learn to Save Trees

Learn to Save Trees (at least try)

! Trees face a lot of hostility in Urban India. Here are some ways you can fight this trend :

1. Your neighbourhood is key to your plans to save trees. Get to know your neighbours before any crisis. Figure out the tree lovers. Share pictures of trees, encourage them to enjoy and value trees.

2. Ensure every tree is numbered and documented. Ask the forest department. If not, then undertake your own census. At the very least, walk along a route, and document every tree with a number, a photo and a description. For example, you can describe where it is located and if it is cemeted till its roots.

3. Find people who can lead tree walks and link trees with other pleasures, like birds, reduced summer heat etc. Enable tree walks in the neighbourhood.

4. Watch out for construction. Often, they pave the space outside, leaving no aeration and watering space for roots. Sometimes, they cut off trees brutally. Make sure the owner, contractor and the Residents Welfare Association know that they do not have any rights outside their gates and over trees. Put it politely, in writing. Reach out to the owner and the neighbours to build a constituency.

5. Ask people not to donate to a mandir or anywhere else on a special day. Instead, ask them to donate the cost of labour and materials to de-tile local trees. To do this, you have to break open the cement or road for upto 4 feet on all sides. Clear up the debris, don't let it choke the tree again. Remember, sometimes, the roots stretch for a long distance, so 4 feet so 4 feet is actually nothing. Also, do not hit the ground too hard-you don't want to damage the roots.

6. Sometimes, trees have to be pruned. This does not mean brutally cut, made asymetrical or converted into leafy stumps. Talk to the neighbourhood to watch out for this.

7. After a storm, if trees fall, monitor how much of the tree is cut for removal. Often, the wood is taken away when infact, the tree could have been easily saved.

8. Above all, use your commonsense. Everyone has enough of it.

! What do I do if I see someone cutting a tree?

1. Challenge the person/s cutting or pruning the tree. If they have permission from the forest department, ask for the original copy of it which should have the forest officer's signature. Cutting has to be stopped till permission is produced. If they refuse to show you the permission, then you can safely ask them to stop immediately. If they do not, dial 100 and call the nearest PCR. Even if your city or town doesn't have a Tree Protection Act,

2. Permission under Dehi's Tree Act is valid only for 30 days from the date of its issue so make sure you check the date of permission issue. If it has been more than 30 days since it was issued, the permission is invalid unless accompanied by an extension warrant

3. If you do not want to approach the people directly and suspect that something is amiss, call 100 and the forest department to report the matter.