The seeds we plant today, with sun & rain and rest, will grow to be the shade that all the land wears best.

The International Small Group Reforestation Program

On June 6 2004, TIST is celebrating its Annual Recurrence Day, the Initiation Day of Tree Planting Program in India. TIST is in the field of encouraging the villagers to plant different species of trees to heal the atmosphere. During the past two years the small groups of TIST have planted more than 1,50,000 trees & 50,000 seedlings. Casuarina, Eucalyptus, Agathai, Tamarind are grown maximum. Some members of TIST Small Groups with their systematic investigation on tree growth have found that growing Casuarina is easier and it does not consume more water, which is also supported by scientific research. It is always good to plant several different species for reforestation, and any particular species should NOT be planted in numbers more than 1/3rd of the total trees planted by the group. Every group should have a minimum of 3 types of tree species in their fields.
Casuarina, Easy Growing / Care-Free Tree

A tall, straight-stemmed, evergreen tree, generally 15 - 25 m but can attain heights of up to 50 m. Its branches bear clusters of long, slender, green, drooping, cylindrical, jointed needle-like branchlets.

The tree is normally propagated through seeds. The seed is sown usually in November, in well-prepared and manured nursery beds. One hectare of casuarina planted area requires about 1/2 kg seeds for nursery sowing. The nursery beds are made up of light and porous soil mixed with fine manure and ash and levelled. The beds are watered with a fine 'rose' to prevent washing off. They are sprayed with Gamexane or BHC around the beds to prevent caterpillars, mole-crickets and ants from carrying away the seeds. The germination starts in 7-10 days and is complete in about 30 days. Early and complete germination is obtained if the beds are covered with straw or palm-leaf. The species is least affected by salinity as the seeds germinate with almost equal vigour in all concentrations.

While transplanting, 2.7 m spacing on all sides is recommended to make the tree grow healthy. This evergreen tree acts as a windbreak and sand-binder. It is a fast growing, draughty-hardy, care-free species which can be grown in climates as varied as coastals and dunes, hot humid tropics and even semi-arid regions. It tends to be bushy when the water-table is low. The tree is able to survive on poor soils because of the presence of nitrogen fixing organisms in the root nodules. The tree is extensively cultivated for soil reclamation and for soil erosion control. By planting this species, numerous stretches of barren area can be reclaimed, where other species can also be subsequently introduced. The tree remains unaffected even by cyclones.

TIST advises the Small Group Members to go for planting this care-free species - Casuarinas and enjoy the regular benefits from TIST.
Weekly Meetings for TIST Small Groups are Important

Meeting weekly is one of the best practices for TIST Small Groups. Weekly meetings enable Small Group members to know each other better, to plan, and to help each other grow.

Gathering weekly strengthens group members in many ways. Your Small Group members can encourage you, help you in difficulty and support you. The entire Small Group comes to know and share the talents that each person brings to the group. Small Group members build up each member.

Your Small Group weekly meeting is an important time to make plans about your nursery and your tree planting also. It is a time to discuss best practices that will benefit other Small Groups as well as your own. After the weekly meeting, some group members can help each other in weeding or planting.

The Small Group Monthly Report forms your group has received are set up to report on one meeting per week. When you give them to the coordinator at the monthly node meeting you will help TIST know what your groups is doing, how it is progressing, what you are learning that you can pass along to other group, and any questions you may have. Be sure to put any new idea or best practice your group has discovered on the Small Group Monthly Report so it can be included it in the Chezhumai. Other TIST Small Groups can benefit from your experience!
TIST Program at Chittoor - Accelerating

The development of Sindhukavi Group and its members along with TIST under the Tree Planting Program has caused marvellous awareness among the villagers of Centre to go in for tree planting. In Chittoor, a first-rate village of Moluchur, couple of new Small Groups have been formed and registered under TIST Program on 28.04.2004. During the May month weekly meetings, the small group members have decided to start and have the following facilities at their village:

1. **Node - TIST Service Center**

Look forward to have a comprehensive article on this first Node - Service Center in our next issue, in which, the whereabouts, activities and programs of this first Node will be well-defined.

2. **Nursery - Intermixture of plants kept together**

In Chittoor Village, few Small Groups like, Sindhukavi, Kaveri, Sampangae and Chamundhi have jointly started a Nursery on 23.05.2004 with more than hundreds of intermixture of seedlings for their future needs. Seedlings like, Casuarina, Eucalyptus, Neem, Lemon, Agathai, Drum Stick are conserved under a shed and regular watering, and rich manure is used for healthy growth. One of the small group leaders of this village says that, from now there will not be any causality in the seedlings by direct sun light.

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**TWP**
Chamundhi Group of Molachur

This group was registered as Small Group under TIST Program on 28.04.2004. Even before the registration, with information and advise from Mr. Prabakar (Project Manager - TIST India), the members of this small group were engaged in bringing up a nursery with more than 700 seedlings of different varieties like Pala, Agathi, Eucalyptus, Casuarina. Mr. Dakshinamoorthy, the group leader has decided to go in for transplanting all the seedlings to a dedicated land in August 2004. This group is very proud to have maximum share of seedlings in the permanent nursery of Molachure Centre.

Sampangae Group of Molachur

This group was registered as Small Group along with Chamundhi Group on 28.04.2004. The beginning of this group looks to be a real contest with the existing groups. One month after registration, this group now owns more than 10,000 casuarina seedlings. In the end of April 2004, casuarina seeds were sowed and on 23.05.2004 the 3-4 inch shoots were transplanted on the light and porous soil beds of their nursery. These shoots will again be transplanted to a different land with minimum 2 m spacing all sides. Other than casuarina, they are planning to plant fruit bearing trees like mango, pala and goava.

Next Issue

What is Mr. Suki Sivam's (a famous speaker of Tamil Channel) view about the Velikathan (Juliflora), an invasive plant, which has spread over maximum areas in Tamil Nadu?
1. Mr. Prabakar Srinivasan, Project Manager
2. Mr. A. Joseph, TIST Coordinator and Correspondent