

state

TREE PLANTATION

Conductor on green mission

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TO enhance Coimbatore's green cover, a government bus conductor is developing a nursery of one lakh saplings at the Coimbatore Central Prison premises and plans to plant them across the city's educational institutions.

Yoganathan (40), was given the Eco Warrior Award in 2008 by the Central government, for his contributions to the cause of environment. He has so far planted around 50,000 saplings across the State.

It was through his ardent efforts that a vast stretch of barren land in the prison got its present green look. With the help of students and nature lovers, he planted around 500 saplings in a five acre piece of land in the prison premises a few months ago.

Of his plans to improve Coimbatore's green cover, Yoganathan says, "As it requires a lot of money to procure saplings, I have decided to develop a nursery. The saplings nurtured here will be distributed free to students of various educational institutions in the city for planting."

Planting saplings apart, over the last two decades Yoganathan has visited 2,251 schools and colleges across the State to create environmental awareness among students. He conveys his message through slide presentations showing interesting visuals on conserving nature. The photographs that he uses in his presentations were collected through some of his friends who are wildlife photographers.

"There is an urgent need to create awareness among the students



EXPRESS

TNSTC bus conductor Yoganathan planting a sapling

to save nature, for they are quick at learning and following whatever is been taught to them," he said.

Reminiscing his own school days he says, "It was during my school days that I joined hands with a group of students to protest against illegal felling of trees in Kotagiri. We used to raise our voice in protest whenever there was a threat to nature."

To instil interest among students to protect the planted saplings, he asks them to give the saplings their own names. He desists from planting saplings in public places and focuses on educational institutions. "If you plant saplings in public places, they will go unprotected. Whereas the saplings planted in educational institutions will get protection at the hands of teachers and students."