

4 MAYFLOWER TREES TARGETED

'Acid Test' Again for City Trees

Express News Service

Coimbatore: The 'acid test' for the city's trees is continuing with miscreants pouring acid at the base of four mayflower trees at Neelambur on Thursday. The bases of the seven-year-old trees were drilled and acid poured into the holes so that they dry up and will have to be cut down.

"This is a terrible. Officials should book the culprit immediately," said A Panner Selvam, a green activist. "Scores of trees here were axed during National Highway extension work. Most of the greenery has vanished. Local workers and passersby do not even have some shade under which to relax," he said.

Local people blame the watchman of an adjoining coconut grove for the incident. They say he did after quarrelling with roadside vendors who had set up shops beneath the trees on Avinashi Road, about 100 metres from a five star hotel near Neelambur.

Last week the watchman demanded money from the traders. However, they did not give him any money and told him off. There does not seem to be any other motivation behind the obnoxious deed, locals say.

Before the incident around four traders selling kambang kuzh (millet gruel), water melon, plantain-stem juice and pathaneer (palmyrah sap) had makeshift shops under the trees. But now, two of them have shifted to another spot nearby.



The bases of trees, which were drilled and treated with acid at Neelambur on Thursday

LOCAL PEOPLE BLAME THE WATCHMAN OF AN ADJOINING COCONUT GROVE FOR THE INCIDENT

M Yoganathan, environmentalist and president, Save Coimbatore Wetlands, said destruction of trees was continuing because the culprits get away lightly. Ac-

ording to him, cutting down one tree will result in a loss of ₹76.5 lakh for the corporation. Yoganathan called for the formation of a district tree authority so that tree felling in the city can be controlled.

On April 22, holes were drilled at the base of around 12 trees and acid poured to destroy them on Tea Estate Road in the heart of the city.