

Silviculture, timber museums come up at College of Forestry

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THE College of Forestry of Kerala Agricultural University (KAU) has set up silviculture and timber museums on its campus with an aim to impart knowledge on forest and forestry.

MLA K Rajan inaugurated the museum on Friday. The museum will give a first-hand information about scientific tree farming techniques and spread awareness on the challenges forests and the agricultural sector face today, and the possible options for their revival.

While the silvicultural museum has been opened in the Department of Silviculture and Agroforestry, the timber museum and xylarium are housed in the Department of Forest Products and Utilisation of the College of Forestry, KAU.

"The museum portrays the historical perspectives of forests in Kerala and the forest treasure shrinking to a nominal area. This is unscientific and poses serious threat to the

agricultural prosperity of the state," said K Vidyasagaran, Dean, Faculty of Forestry.

"The indiscriminate felling and large scale conversion of forests have resulted in drastic reduction in water yield from the Western Ghats. About 70 per cent of rain water goes waste. Since Kerala's agricultural prosperity primarily depends on the hydrological cycle in the Western Ghats, this has had a telling effect on the farming sector," he said. "This highlights the need for conserving the remaining forests for maintaining ecological balance."

According to T K Kunhamu, professor and head, Department of Silviculture and Agroforestry, the museum highlights the need for enhancing tree farming outside the conventional forest areas, which offer high economic returns on the one hand while enhancing the ecosystem benefits on the other. The museum gives pictorial representation of suitable agroforestry models, ideal tree species for farm forestry and agro forestry and explains their economic benefits.

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