

TNPL uses culled *Senna spectabilis* trees from Niligiris to make paper at Karur, Tiruchi units

TNPL has cleared over 200 hectares of the 1,500 hectares in the Niligiri Biosphere Reserve in collaboration with Forest Department

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Senna spectabilis tree

In a bid to productively utilise the *Senna spectabilis* (Calceolaria shower) trees culled to protect native flora, Tamil Nadu Newsprint and Papers Limited (TNPL) has been collaborating with the Forest Department to remove the invasive species from

Mudumalai and Sathyamangalam tiger reserves in the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve (NBR), and process them as pulpwood for its mills based in Karur and Tiruchi district.

The joint initiative to clear *Senna spectabilis* from the tiger reserves is being carried out as per a direction from Madras High Court and Government order, according to an official statement from TNPL's Kagithapuram plant in Karur on Wednesday.

Official sources said that TNPL had removed *Senna spectabilis* from approximately 215 hectares of the 1,500 hectares earmarked by the Forest Department in the NBR region, as per a Corporate Environment Responsibility (CER) initiative.

Originally a species native to America, *Senna spectabilis* was introduced to India as an ornamental plant. The dense foliage of this hardy plant arrests the growth of other indigenous tree and grass species, thus causing a food shortage for the native wildlife.

To make up for the lower pulp yield and density, debarked *Senna spectabilis* wood is chipped and mixed with eucalyptus and casuarina pulpwood chips before it is processed at the TNPL's paper mills in Karur and Tiruchi district.

With the help of skilled labourers and machinery, TNPL has extracted around 10,000 MT of wood to produce paper and paper board without disturbing the native flora in the targeted areas, said the statement.

The raw materials are 'cooked' under high pressure at a high temperature in digesters, into pulp form. Paper is manufactured from this mass after it is bleached with industrial chemicals.

Among the other invasive species TNPL is working to eradicate is *Acacia mearnsii* or black wattle from 1,000 hectares in NBR region.

The statement added that TNPL is also collaborating with Karur district administration to develop a multi-species micro-forest on government lands that have been cleared of *Prosopis juliflora*, by supplying about 10 lakh saplings of 37 local species.