

# Barking up the right tree

Photos: Yogesh Kumar

School kids learn what it takes to grow trees at NDMC nursery

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**New Delhi:** The New Delhi Municipal Council nursery at Chanakyapuri resounded with the chatter of schoolchildren on Wednesday as over 1,000 students gathered there to learn about the lifecycle of trees and the processes that go into growing them. This workshop was organised as part of Hero TOI Green Drive, the second segment of which is being executed by NDMC.

Students of 17 schools were shown how growing trees at the nursery involved plant-

New Delhi Municipal Council



ing hundreds of seedlings in a special 'soilless' mixture. This, NDMC officials asserted, was the best alternative to natural soil. "After conducting research and tests, we have been using this mixture for several years," said one of them. "Other nurseries have also shifted to this technique, which provides nutrients naturally to the seedlings and promotes faster growth."

After an enthusiastic start to the rousing beats of Djembe drummers, the students learnt that the special mixture consisted of three parts of coco peat, one part of a soil conditioner called soilrite and



one part of a water-retaining mineral called vermiculite. Then the children were taken to the state-of-the-art sapling facility containing nearly one lakh seedlings. It is built to give nursery officials control over humidity and temperature. The students later took part in a quiz related to the events of the day.

"I learnt a lot today, especially about alternatives

“The event was good...it will benefit not only the environment but also the children who participated. They got to see the work that goes on behind the scenes to maintain parks and gardens. This will help motivate the children to plant more trees

—CHANCHAL YADAV | NDMC SECRETARY

to natural soil and how we can use mixtures like these to grow plants at home," said Ritika Joshi, who studies in Class VI in The Indian School.

NDMC secretary Chanchal Yadav said the students' experience would not only help make Delhi greener but also provide them with practical knowledge. "The children got to see the behind-the-scenes work that goes into maintaining public parks and gardens. This will help motivate them to plant more trees in the city and they will also appreciate the effort necessary for growing and maintaining trees and plants," said Yadav.

Seventeen schools under the Newspaper in Edu-

cation (NIE) programme participated in the event on Wednesday. They were Raman Munjal Vidya Mandir, DAV Public (Jasola), Kalka Public (Alaknanda), GD Goenka (Sarita Vihar), Bluebells International (Kailash Colony), Tagore International (East of Kailash), Indian School (Sadiq Nagar), Cambridge School (Srinivaspuri), New Horizon (Nizamuddin), Navy Children (Chanakyapuri), Laxman Public (Hauz Khas), Greenfields (Safdarjung Enclave), The Heritage (Vasant Kunj), Amity International (Saket), Govt Boys Senior Secondary (Janakpuri), Sarvodaya Bal Vidyalaya (Naraina) and Social Vision School.

WHY THE  
GREEN  
DRIVE

ONCE THE SAPLINGS GROW INTO TREES, THEY WILL REGULATE LOCAL CLIMATE AND IMPROVE AIR QUALITY

- ▶ Foliage will block sunlight, and evaporation from leaves will increase the cooling effect
- ▶ Trees will absorb carbon dioxide and reduce dust. They will also act as a buffer against noise

- ▶ Birds and wildlife may increase
- ▶ Erosion will reduce and the land will become more fertile as some plants fix nitrogen in soil and decaying matter (humus) adds carbon