



Tree Planting

newsletter

Patron: JEREMY IRONS

SALT OF THE EARTH (Registered Charity 328328)

March 2010

Dear Tree Planting Supporter

Janet and I are just back from our annual visit to SCAD. This time we made an in depth study of the tree planting scheme and we thought that you, the regular tree planting supporters, would like to hear about the plans and progress that has been made.

This is the fourth year of the scheme and both SCAD and ourselves have gone through a valuable learning process in this time. We have now developed tree planting activities to suit a whole number of situations. We are pleased to report that the trees that have been planted are contributing greatly to the environment whilst generating income and enhancing diet, health, the soil and water retention. Trees are wonderful, enduring and beneficial and SCAD and ourselves are determined to promote tree planting as much as we can as a significant long term life promoting activity.

SCAD continue to keep the costs of the scheme extremely low and, in fact, the average planting cost of a tree is working out at less than 50 pence. I don't know of any other scheme that can say this!

We hope you enjoy the news and that you will continue to support and promote the scheme.

Murray Frankland

Progress in 2009



Corinne Sharpe and SCAD college volunteers plant a coconut tree

Thanks to a good monsoon over 120,000 trees were planted in the target area in 2009. These were planted in a whole number of different places with different needs. The survival rate of the trees is over 80% and wherever possible failed trees are replaced.

These trees and the others planted in previous years are making a difference. Many more trees are in evidence around reservoirs, on farmlands, school and Church properties and any other areas that SCAD can think of. They have even planted trees in the local City jail (see case study). Well cared for indigenous trees can grow anything up to 6 metres a year in the prevailing climate.

Thousands of houses now have trees in their back gardens and many more are planned under the 'Each House 3 Trees' scheme (see photo). It will not be long before the householders will enjoy eating and selling the fruit that they grow.

The Area where we plant.

This southern part of Tamil Nadu is a drought prone area where the only significant rain falls in a ten week period starting in mid October. The soil that is available for tree planting is often of poor quality and needs some attention. Careful tree selection is necessary as is selective watering, especially in the first year of planting prior to the trees becoming established.

Why plant trees in this area?

When we talk of the reasons for tree planting in the UK we often think that trees are most important for their carbon retention properties. In Tamil Nadu the main reasons are to generate income, improve soil quality and water retention and help the micro climate.

All the trees that SCAD help to plant can be used in some way for income generation. Many varieties of fruit trees are planted as well as others for wood, fodder and medicinal properties. Some trees like the famous Indian Neem tree can be used for medicines, pesticides and oil.

SCAD's Services

After suitable places have been identified for tree planting and individuals or groups identified to take responsibility for the planting and maintenance a great deal of preparatory work needs to take place. The planting season is largely restricted to the monsoon period and a few months after (October to February).

Before planting, the varieties of trees that will be planted has to be decided on and everyone involved in planting has to attend training sessions on ground preparation, planting and maintenance. Each participant has to understand not only how to grow trees successfully but also to take responsibility for seeing to it that the trees in their care survive and flourish.

SCAD have established five regional tree nurseries to grow the saplings and last year grew over 100,000. SCAD can supply most of the saplings required but, at the moment, they have to buy in grafted fruit trees. Grafted trees have the advantage of fruiting two to three years earlier than conventionally grown trees.



Children tend trees planted in their school

Urban Case Study

The SCAD team have supplied several thousand trees to the local large jail where long term inmates have planted and maintained them under SCAD's supervision in the recreation areas. This has proved very successful for the prisoners, their families and the prison staff. It has given

the prisoners something productive to do which is already improving their environment by providing shade and a more pleasant surroundings for them and their visiting families. The prison authorities are pleased because the prisoners' morale is better thus making their job easier.

Target Population

SCAD have decided to adopt a wide ranging approach to selecting people to plant trees. Suitable people and groups are selected by the SCAD field staff who work in the 450 villages that SCAD have adopted. A big source of support for the scheme comes from the 2,500 Women's Self Help Groups and the Village Development Committees that SCAD have encouraged and supported. These groups can identify pieces of unused land around the villages and promote the idea of planting trees there. They may even take responsibility for planting and maintaining the trees. In addition many of the members of these groups agree to plant trees in their own back gardens.

Another important group of people are the considerable numbers of marginal farmers. These small family run farms of between 1 and 8 acres often struggle to survive. SCAD agricultural staff are convinced that if a proportion of the acreage is progressively laid to trees then the farm will become more profitable and sustainable.

The problem is to convince the farmers to plant trees on land that will not provide income for a few years. However, this can be achieved by use of inter planting and cropping. It does mean a change of mind set which, as we all know, is difficult to achieve. However more and more farmers are being won round (see case study).

Farming Case Study

A local farmer called Tamilarasu was finding it very difficult to earn a living wage from his small acreage and consulted SCAD for help. SCAD suggested he grew some trees and two years ago, with the help of SCAD, he planted 2,000 Casuarina trees supplied by a SCAD nursery. These trees grew well and last year he planted a further 4,000 and expects to plant 6,000 this year. The Casuarina tree is an extremely thin and fast growing tree and can be selectively commercially harvested after three years. The wood is used for paper making and as scaffolding. He is achieving a good survival rate of over 80% and plans to start thinning and selling some of the timber next year. He can then expect a good regular financial return and will be replacing felled trees to maintain future income. The farmer and his family are very happy and most appreciative of the help that he and his family have been given. He is a prominent member of the local SCAD Farmers' group and has started to influence group members to follow his lead.

SALT OF THE EARTH Registered Charity 328328

TELEPHONE: 0116 2766439 WEBSITE: www.salt-of-the-earth.org.uk E-MAIL: info@salt-of-the-earth.org.uk
Published by Salt of the Earth, 101 Scraftoft Lane, Leicester

Designed by Eddie Gaylard www.gaylard-design.co.uk