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Editorial

National Festival: It is very pleasing to note from the available statistics that the "Tree Planting Festival", celebrated throughout the Indian Dominion for the past three years as a National Festival, has been really a successful national endeavour to enrich the natural resources of India. The importance of trees has now gained the public recognition.

Every tiller of the soil knows the importance of trees. Trees give shade and shelter besides acting as wind breaks. He is also aware of the usefulness of the trees in other respects, namely, serving as wood for house building, for his ploughs and other agricultural implements and also as fuel for his domestic purposes. As such, trees are valuable asset in any farm or holding. Scientists may attach greater importance to the existance of trees particularly in high level localities of any country than an ordinary layman.

Trees are well known for their role as moderators of weather. In foreign countries data have been collected to show that trees function not only as wind breaks but also as regulators of temperature and humidity of the atmosphere and also as helpers in the condensation of clouds. This is perhaps the reason why it is often said that trees create rain. It does not mean that without the natural cloud formation trees can bring rain but it means that trees aid the formation and condensation of clouds. This awe-inspiring capacity of trees can be well understood if it is realised that the thick foliage of trees is capable of retaining two to seven cents of rain water. Such a wet surface at such a height will really create favourable conditions for the formation and condensation of clouds.

The regulating habits of the closely grown trees in high level areas in avoiding soil erosion due to the torrential nature of rain are now being brought to light when the question of bringing every inch

of soil under plough engages the attention of both the Scientist and Administrator to tide over the present food shortage. Good trees also assist the formation of subterranean springs due to the cleavages in the soil on account of their penetrating roots and consequently control the enundations in the natural rivers. Conservation of top soil and maintenance of good subterranean springs will really contribute a lot to the agricultural prosperity of a country.

In this great national festival the Madras Agricultural Department is playing a noble role. The Departmental staff take a keen interest not only in the planting of new saplings but also in the careful and successful maintenance of those planted already. Further, with the help of the Agricultural Research Stations, the Officers are able to get ready thousands and thousands of seedlings for planting. A good variety of useful avenue trees and good green manure shrubs and plants are being raised in thousands not only in all the available open places but also in the agricultural lands as far as green manure plants are concerned. It will not be an exaggerated statement if it is said that the Paddy cultivators of the Madras State have become highly green manure minded farmers since they have realised the advantages of applying green manure to the paddy crops and getting green manure with the help of their own resources without any high initial outlay.

Creator is also a protector. This is the law of Universe. This law has to be honoured when we think of this great national festival of tree planting and take a keen interest in its celebrations. If this is done every planter of a sapling will see to its successful and useful growth and if this is actually attained in practice days are not far off when we, the inhabitants, will not only have a control over the weather but also place our country in a stable position so far as the problem of good production is concerned. A land deprived of trees and vegetation is a desert. Trees are our wealth, and let us nourish them if we are to be in health.

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