

Rethink Plastic Campaign- Demonstration of Reuse of Waste Plastic Bottles to Raise Native Tree Saplings at Airoli

Date: 23rd January 2020

Number of volunteers: 55

Activities undertaken:

1. Orientation session on the counter measures project and Rethink Plastic Campaign
2. Treasure hunt for native roadside saplings
3. Saplings plantation in waste plastic bottles

Description:

TERI organized a half day workshop to ‘demonstrate reuse of waste plastic bottles to raise native tree saplings’, for fifty five volunteers from the National Service Scheme (NSS) Units of Datta Megha College of Engineering (DMCE) and Ramrao Adik Institute of Technology (RAIT) on 23rd January 2020 at Airoli.

The workshop began with an interactive session on plastic pollution to sensitize the volunteers about the impacts and countermeasures of plastic pollution. The volunteers then took a pledge against single use plastic and perception survey on ‘Plastic use and management’.

After the interactive session, the students, led by TERI representatives, went out in the vicinity to search for saplings of native tree species like Peepal (*Ficus religiosa*), Banyan (*Ficus benghalensis*), and Umbar (*Ficus racemosa*); growing along roadsides and cracks of walls/buildings, where they may not necessarily grow and survive. The volunteers collected a total of 107 such saplings to be planted in waste plastic bottles, as part of the ‘Rethink Plastic’ campaign.

After collection of saplings, the volunteers prepared the waste plastic bottles (collected as part of the campaign) for sapling plantation. The upper cut portion was collected for further recycling. 187 waste plastic bottles, of more than 1500 bottles collected as part of the campaign were used to plant 187 saplings of native trees. These saplings will be nurtured before being handed over for afforestation. These saplings on maturing would help offset the carbon footprint towards production of the plastic bottles they were raised in, and the bottle planters can again be used to raise new saplings, thus closing the plastic loop. The workshop also motivated the volunteers to join the campaign activities and also contribute native tree saplings.



Volunteers preparing bottle planters from out of waste plastic bottles: Cutting bottles (Left) Making holes at the bottom of bottles (Right)



Volunteers preparing bottle planters from out of waste plastic bottles: Filing soil in half cut bottles



Volunteers planting saplings in the prepared planters



Volunteers collecting saplings of native tree species growing along roadsides and in cracks of walls and buildings