

Plantation of elephant fodder



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Rituraj Phukan 7 July 2013 Updated 7 Jul 11974 views

A project, 'Community Elephant Fodder Plantation' to plant banana plants in the Karbi foothills was launched by Green Guard Nature Organization today with local villagers in areas of intense human-elephant conflict, on the last day of the 'Bon Mahotsav' week. In the first phase, stumps of the variety locally known as 'Bhim Kol', a giant variety relished by elephants, were collected from Lunsung village. Villagers led by Satyam Naik and the Green Guard team led by Dulu Bora went around Lungsung for voluntary door-to-door collection of banana stumps. Villagers have also started collecting jackfruits seeds for plantation as the fruit is also a favourite of the pachyderms. More

stumps and seeds will be collected from other villages in the area in the coming days. In the second phase, these stumps will be transported by a lorry up to the Karbi foothills and planted in areas left barren by jhum or shifting cultivation.

The 'Bhim Kol' is a giant species of banana from Assam and elephants often intrude into human settlements in fringe forest areas to feed on them. The large trunk of the 'Bhim Kol' is eaten by elephants and the banana regrows from the stump or any part of it that is left behind. The stumps of the 'Bhim Kol', once planted, are very hard to get rid off and spread very easily and it is expected that every stump planted will grow into a grove in a few years. Each of these stumps will contribute to the abundance of elephant fodder in the Karbi foothills and will hopefully, help to reduce intrusions in search of fodder.

The enthusiastic involvement of the local communities in these areas of Human-Elephant Conflict gives us a lot of hope for success in this project. These people will also be involved in the plantation phase and Green Guard Nature Organization will bear all the costs of transportation and food out of our own pockets. Many of these villagers are themselves victims of Human-Elephant Conflict and have lost either relatives or properties or crops during elephant intrusion. With the initiation of this project, Green Guard Nature Organization hopes to motivate more villages in the entire human-elephant conflict affected belt along the Nagaon-Karbi Anglong border to come forward and join us in this attempt to increase the availability of elephant fodder in their natural habitat in the area.

Rituraj Phukan

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BY RITURAJ PHUKAN

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