

Tea estate students pledge to preserve medicinal plants

CHRONICLE NEWS SERVICE

GUWAHATI: In order to preserve over 100 varieties of indigenous edible and medicinal plants and herbs, over four thousand school children from tea estates have pledged together on Monday for the noble cause.

Around 4200 school children from 17 tea estates in Tinsukia, Dibrugarh, Charaideo, Udalguri and Sonitpur districts would be participating in the 'Sustainability Programme' conducted by the Apeejay Tea estates. The participants would grow and maintain kitchen gardens in the tea estates' schools.

"We are keen to see that the children in our estates feel ownership about the environment and become budding conservationists. In the long run, the next generation must have a much better in-depth understanding of environmental conservation and its importance," said Haren Barua, Sustainability Manager, Apeejay Tea Estate.



Barua further added that our schools which is being pursued in two steps – identification of edible plants (to combat future food scarcity), medicinal plants, rare and endangered species of plants and their habitat as a first step towards conservation, and encouraging children to multiply the growth of such plants in schools as a second step – both ensuring that conservation of vegetation beyond tea becomes a habit among the next generation.

The conservation of habitats of these identified plants will be their next big target. It has been the second year of their programme and the tea

estates started feeling that the school children in their estates have developed the ability to identify edible plants.

"We have a small kitchen garden in the Bokpara LP School, planted and maintained by the students. We are all set to increase its size and scope," said Manmohan Bhamrah, Manager of Budlabeta Tea Estate. While Utpal Sarmah, Manager of Pengaree Tea Estate said, "Our aim is to list out medicinal herbs for various ailments and propagate their usage which will lead to conservation of our tangible heritage and to set up a kitchen garden in the school campus this year."