



# KERATAN SURAT KHABAR

SURAT KHABAR	:	STARLIFESTYLE			
TARIKH	:	22/6/2021	MUKA SURAT	:	3
JABATAN	:	KeTSA/ JPSM			



**LARGE**-scale tree-planting campaigns, though they may be imbued with good intentions, don't always work. The scientific community is littered with arguments for and against such campaigns, and whether they actually benefit the climate.

Critics have pointed out how the aggressive spread of *Prosopis juliflora*, a woody shrub from Central and South America that was planted in Kenya's Baragoi County in the 1980s, has devastated indigenous biodiversity and starved local animals.

In February, a group of scientists from the renowned Kew Royal Botanic Gardens in Britain and Botanic Gardens Conservation International set out 10 "golden rules" for reforestation, published in an open access article in the journal *Global Change Biology*.

**> Protect existing forests first:** Besides being major long-term carbon sinks, old-growth (or primary) forests have better resilience to climate change threats such as fire, storms and drought. They can also help adjacent replanting sites recover.

**> Prioritise participation of local people:** Involving the local community is important as they will often be the ones looking after the forest, preparing the land, planting the trees and maintaining the site. This will also allow for employment opportunities.

**> Maximise biodiversity recovery to meet environmental, cultural and economic goals:** Reforestation should not only be about mitigating climate change but also about conserving species, improving economic conditions for local communities, food security and maintaining the stability of soil and water systems.

**> Select the right site for**

**reforestation by planting trees in historically forested areas:** The best area is previously forested land that has degraded. Landscapes such as natural wetlands, savannah, and grasslands should be avoided.

**> Use natural forest regrowth wherever possible:** Natural regeneration can be achieved by simply protecting the area from further damage, especially in areas close to existing forests. In many cases, it can be cheaper and more effective than planting trees.

**> Select the right tree species to maximise biodiversity:** Plant a mix of both rare and endangered species which are typical of the local natural forest ecosystem. Exotic species should be avoided as they can become invasive.

**> Ensure that trees are resilient to adapt to climate change:** Use tree seeds with appropriate levels of genetic diversity suited to the local climate to ensure the survival and resilience of a planted forest.

**> Plan ahead on how to source for seeds and saplings:** Infrastructure such as nurseries and seed supply systems are essential to the success of any tree-planting programme.

**> Combine scientific knowledge with local knowledge:** Traditional local knowledge is important, especially about birds and plants which are important biodiversity indicators, while science can help in the selection of tree species.

**> Think about a source of income for stakeholders:** The sustainability of forest restoration depends on the income generated from it over that from alternative exploitative land use, and for this to be shared fairly. Among such measures are ecotourism.



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