

NOW, MASKS THAT GROW INTO PLANTS UPON DISPOSAL

Relevant for: Environment | Topic: Environmental Conservation, Sustainable Development, and EIA

A seed mask made by Paper Seed.

One-time face mask users now have the option of using cotton masks which grow into plants upon their disposal.

A social entrepreneurship called Paper Seed, set up near Mangaluru, has come out with masks that contain seeds of tulsi and tomato.

Paper Seed founder and artist Nitin Vas of Pakshikere told *The Hindu* that these masks have been made using cotton rags. "They are made from recycled rags and the inner linings are made with cotton cloth. They are thick enough to prevent infection," he said.

Mr. Vas added, "Masks reach the ocean, other waterbodies, and landfill sites, thus polluting the environment. Eco-friendly masks like the one having seeds will add to the growth of plants." Paper Seed has made about 400 such masks now.

The artist said that these masks cannot be reused after washing and are meant for one-time use. "We will add such seeds which can grow into trees while making the next batch of masks," he said, adding that demands for these masks have been placed from people in Chennai, Bengaluru, Madikeri, and other places where he has contacts. There is a demand for mass production too.

Earlier, Paper Seed had made eco-friendly rakhis having seeds of tomato, cucumber, capsicum, tulsi, and the like for Raksha Bandhan.

Paper Seed also makes eco-friendly jewellery, earrings, keychains, ladles, cups from coconut shells, driftwood sculptures, and baskets from locally available creepers and climbers. Some of the other products include seed pen, bamboo toothbrush, designed paper mache, seed paper notepad, paper straw, recycled paper cards, newspaper seed pencils, and organic agarbati.

It has also made paper flags for Independence Day. The other latest products include toys made from paper mache or paper pulp. Mr. Vas has named them as Mangaluru toys on the lines of the Channapatna toys which are made of soft wood, to reflect the local culture.

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