

RM Mawlangkhar Nursery



“The ET Mawlangkhar nursery in West Khasi Hills, now employs 20-30 workers daily, providing year-round income previously unavailable through seasonal agriculture.”

Nestled in the serene hills of Mawlangkhar, situated in the district of West Khasi Hills of Meghalaya, the nursery has become a vision of regeneration, community participation, and sustainable growth. Established as a model nursery, it serves as both a learning hub and a livelihood generator for the local communities. This impact story explores the journey, the activities, and the ripple effects the nursery has created in the region.

The Beginning

The Mawlangkhar Nursery was conceptualized to meet the growing demand for quality forest saplings of the indigenous variety in the districts of West and South West Khasi Hills of Meghalaya. Since its inception in the month of April, 2024, the project aimed to demonstrate how scientific nursery management could blend with traditional knowledge. Local youth and farmers were engaged from the very beginning, receiving training in propagation, potting, and nursery maintenance. The nursery quickly evolved into a center where theory met practice, creating a sustainable model for the future.

Field Activities and Operations

Every day, the nursery buzzes with activity—potting of seedlings, preparation of soil mixtures, irrigation management, nutrient management and the careful loading and unloading of saplings. Teams of workers coordinate seamlessly to ensure thousands of seedlings are ready for distribution to plantations across the state. The organized flow of work not only supports timely delivery of matured saplings being grown mostly in Root trainers but also imparts discipline and accountability within the workforce.

Community Impact

The greatest success of the nursery lies in the empowerment of the local community. Many villagers who once depended solely on seasonal agriculture practices now find steady

income opportunities through the nursery, which on an average employs 20 to 30 workers per day in the nursery operation activities. Training programs conducted by Earthtree Nursery Experts have enhanced their skills in nursery techniques, giving them confidence to replicate similar models in their own villages. Women, in particular, have found dignified employment, balancing household responsibilities while contributing to the family income.

Beyond Saplings: A Community Uplifted

What makes Mawlangkhar Nursery remarkable is not just the lakhs of saplings it produces each season. Its true legacy is the human transformation it has sparked. Men and women who once saw themselves only as casual labours are now confident nursery professionals due on the job training imparted by Mr. Wanjob and Mr. Azriel under the guidance of Mr. Diganta Sarma: the members of Earthtree Nursery Team. Consequently, the Nursery Assistants carry skills that are in demand across the forestry and plantation sector. The nursery has also brought work closer to home. Instead of traveling long distances or waiting for temporary jobs, villagers now find continuous, year-round employment right within their community. This has created not only financial security but also a sense of dignity and belongingness.



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Environmental Contribution

Beyond economic empowerment, the Mawlangkhar Nursery is directly contributing to environmental restoration. The seedlings produced here are being planted in degraded landscapes of individual farmers and community plantations. Propagation of subtropical fruit trees like *Terminalia chebula* and *Tamarindus indica* have added interest among various landowners. The nursery thus plays a pivotal role in Meghalaya's green agenda and India's larger commitment to sustainable development goals.

Future Prospects

Looking ahead, the Mawlangkhar Nursery envisions scaling up its production capacity, integrating climate control technology of Green House and Agro Shade Houses, and diversifying into more species suitable for the local biodiversity. Plans are also underway to create a demonstration-cum-training center that will attract students, researchers, and farmers from across Northeast India, especially for temperate species. This forward-looking approach ensures that the nursery will remain relevant and impactful for days to come.

Conclusion

The Mawlangkhar Nursery stands as a symbol of how small, localised initiatives can create profound ripple effects—empowering communities, restoring the environment, and strengthening livelihoods. Its story reflects the possibility of blending modern scientific practices with community participation to achieve holistic development. As it continues to grow, the nursery will remain a beacon of hope and resilience in the hills of Meghalaya



Stories of Empowered Lives

Pynshaibor Nongsiej –From Seasonal Labourer to Supervisor

Pynshanbor had some basic agricultural training from the government in the past, but his opportunities were limited. He relied on seasonal labour, earning just enough to survive. Today, as the Nursery Supervisor, he oversees operations with authority and skill besides learning how to maintain stock registers. With a steady income, he supports his family with dignity and looks to the future with pride.

Umelinda Nongsiej – A Mother Who Found Her Calling

At just 26, Umlinda juggled caring for two small children with managing a household. Employment seemed out of reach; she couldn't leave her children alone for long days of work far from home. But the nursery, located close to her house, gave her an opening. She joined, learned quickly, and today is one of the leading women workers, not only earning an income but also mentoring others. Her story has become a beacon of inspiration for other young mothers in Mawlangkhar.

Shalmilin S. Mawdoh – A Science Graduate Rebuilding Her Career

Bright and skilled in computers, Shalmilin, after the birth of her first child, she found herself jobless and uncertain. The Earthtree Nursery gave her a second chance. Living nearby, she could join without neglecting her 3 months old baby. Now working as a Nursery Assistant, she blends her education with her new nursery skills to contribute meaningfully — while also supporting her husband in building a stable household.



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