

How to create an Oasis

Author - DtE staff, Published on - 12.9.2019

Mixing it up to save Banni grasslands

Pastoral communities are fighting invasive species in Gujarat's Banni grasslands by using a combination of seeds that can withstand heavy, normal and low rainfall

Gujarat's pastoral Maldhari community is trying to revive the Banni grasslands that are fast degrading due to the onslaught of invasive plant species *Prosopis juliflora*. The members, along with non-profit Sahjeevan, started a project earlier this year where they are replacing the invasive species they call gando babool with mixed varieties of native seeds in six plots spread over 125 hectares (ha). "Rainfall is erratic. So we are using a seed mix that can withstand heavy, normal and low rainfall," says Pankaj Joshi of Sahjeevan.

They are also reclaiming the grassland portions where some of the community members started illegal farming. "We are sowing small pellet balls of mixed seeds, manure, soil and water in 15 ha," says Joshi. The members are also sensitising the young members of the community to draw them back to livestock rearing.

First published by **Down to Earth** on 7 Sep. 2019 as part of **How to Create an Oasis**