

# KYC

## **Know Your Campus**

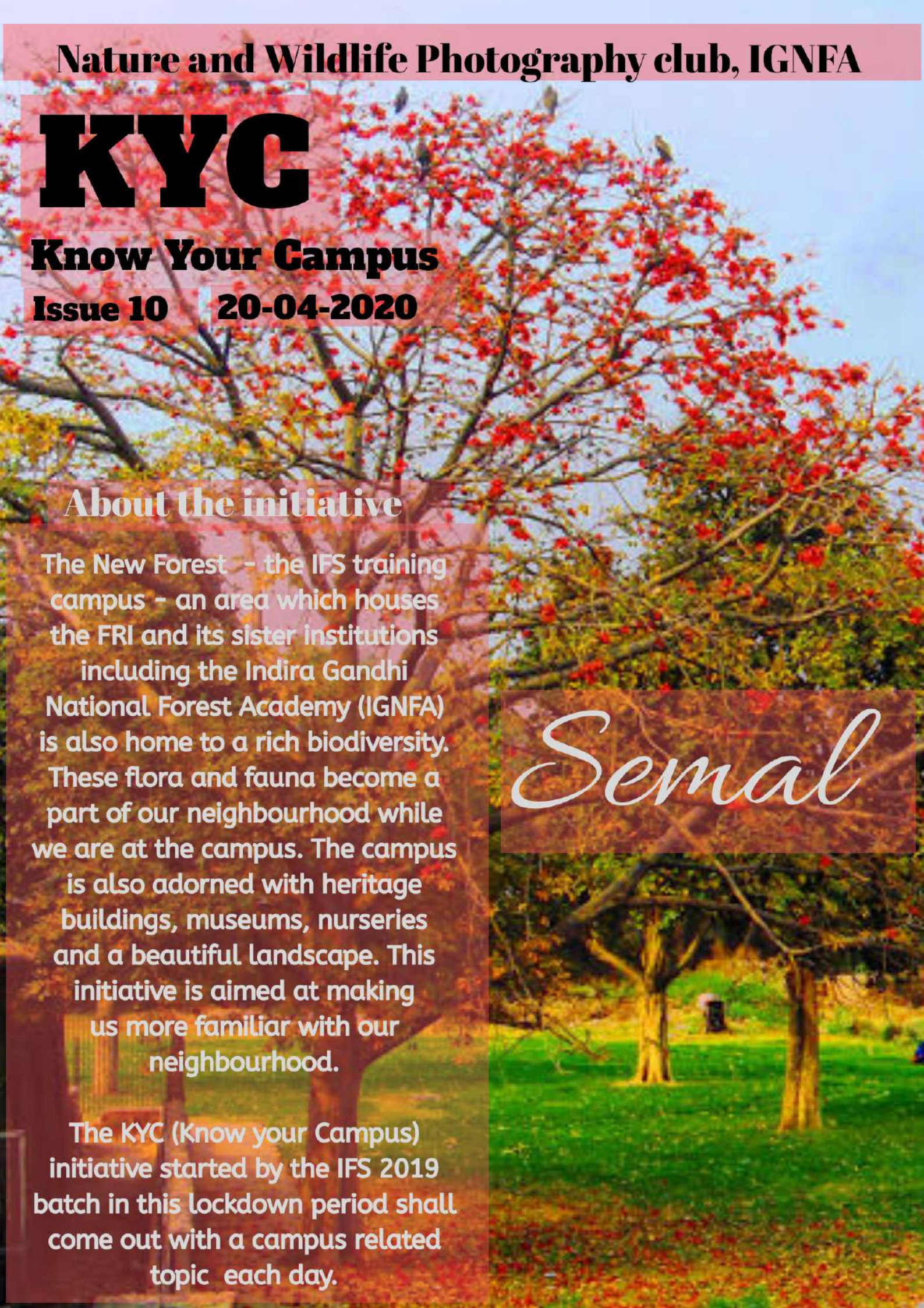
**Issue 10     20-04-2020**

### **About the initiative**

The New Forest - the IFS training campus - an area which houses the FRI and its sister institutions including the Indira Gandhi National Forest Academy (IGNFA) is also home to a rich biodiversity. These flora and fauna become a part of our neighbourhood while we are at the campus. The campus is also adorned with heritage buildings, museums, nurseries and a beautiful landscape. This initiative is aimed at making us more familiar with our neighbourhood.

The KYC (Know your Campus) initiative started by the IFS 2019 batch in this lockdown period shall come out with a campus related topic each day.

*Semal*





**On transitions to spring ,  
stands tall this tree with red lights,  
Leafless, spiny and harsh you may seem  
But look at you! In your bloom,  
Your flowers bow - graceful,  
Their bosom with nectar full  
You are the delight of the lifeless summer  
-the feast of the birds  
-the favourite of bees  
And indeed, nature's masterpiece!**



Scientific name: *Bombax ceiba*

Family: Malvaceae

Local Name: Semal/ silk cotton

Distribution : Native to India.

Tropical deciduous tree.

In India, it grows upto  
altitude of 1500m.



Canopy shape: Tall tree, globular spreading crown.





**Stem :** Erect stem that develops buttresses when mature.  
Young stem bears spikes for protection



**Leaf :** Palmate leaf.  
Approx six elliptical leaflets radiating from a long flexible petiole



**Flowers:** Flowering between January- March.  
Leafless tree in full flowering.  
Magnificent pink to red flowers.

**Fruit:** Shape of capsule containing numerous seeds embedded in white silky cotton like fibre.  
Hence the name silk cotton tree.



# Semal - one tree with many uses

## Medicinal uses

Antiseptic  
On skin disorders  
On gastrointestinal issues  
On Asthma, etc  
Important in  
ethno-medicine

## Textile industry

Cotton used as fibre  
Filling in life jackets



## Avenue and Agro forestry

Cooling effect in urban spaces



## Consumption

Some tribals eat  
the flowers

Some tribes even worship it

## Forestry

Fire resistant

Pioneer specie useful  
to reclaim wastelands

# **Ecological importance**

A hardy specie capable of growing in wastelands is an important tool to combat desertification.

The tree strongly binds the soil reducing soil erosion.

The leaves fix carben and are shed before flowering.

Thus it helps in carbon sequestration.

It's a bio indicator - late flowering may indicate hot summer or delayed monsoon.

The flowers filled with nectar are food to numerous bees, birds thereby giving life to a rich ecosystem.

**The Semal is thus a versatile plant with varied uses and a beautiful form. While walking down the campus, like near the Post office, this tree can be seen rightly standing with pride.**

Text : Nisha Kumari IFS 2019

Photographs: Shrikant Ingalhalikar, Botanist, Pune

Google

Design: Kasturi Sule, IFS 2019

Reference: Trees of Pune.

(Book by Shrikant Ingalhalikar and Sharvari Barve)

Feedback: [kastusule@gmail.com](mailto:kastusule@gmail.com)