

Driven by social media, organization on a mission to make every leaf count

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Aditi Deodhar, the founder of Brown Leaf

PUNE: City-based organisation 'Brown leaf', true to the adage "necessity is the mother of invention", has taken to collecting dry leaves and using them in multiple forms to cut down [carbon footprint](#).

The initiative was born when, in February 2016, Aditi Deodhar, an IT professional, was looking for a solution to dispose of dry leaves in an eco-friendly way. She surfed the internet and texted people trying to find a solution.

Sujata Naphade, who read her message in a common WhatsApp group, contacted her. Naphade needed these leaves as manure for her 3,500 sqft plot, where she grows vegetables organically for household consumption.

"After she gave me the dry leaves, it struck Aditi that there may be more people like her who are clueless about what to do with the dry leaves and many others like me who needed these. Soon, she created a WhatsApp group called 'Brown leaf' where she added the needy and the donors," Naphade, a B.tech in agriculture, said. There is no financial transaction involved.

Deodhar also promotes composting and mulching of these dry leaves.

"Trees shed leaves in autumn, which lie there the whole summer creating a protective layer that avoids evaporation of groundwater. In monsoon, these leaves decompose and add nutrients to the soil. Sadly, most people tend to donate the leaves rather than trying to decompose them," she said.

Thanks to social media, Deodhar's initiative has found takers in Hyderabad, Delhi, and Nagpur.

"[Facebook](#) and WhatsApp are the new forms of word of mouth, people trust things if a post is being shared by someone they know. Today our WhatsApp group has 120 members," she added.

Vasundhara Swachata Abhiyan (VSA), an organisation that works to restore the greenery of hills near Pashan and Baner, is one of the beneficiaries of her initiative. "We got to know about [Brown leaf](#) through social media and got in contact with Aditi, she helped us receive 25 trucks of dry leaves," Shailesh Valvaikar, a volunteer at [VSA](#), said.

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