

Republic of the Philippines
Province of Leyte
Sangguniang Panlalawigan

"Leyte Endemic Tree Restoration Ordinance of 2025."

EXPLANATORY NOTE

This proposed ordinance seeks to institutionalize the exclusive planting of endemic tree species in all tree-planting activities within the Province of Leyte. It is anchored on Republic Act No. 10176, also known as the Arbor Day Act of 2012, which mandates the annual observance of Arbor Day and encourages tree planting as a national duty.

The measure responds to the urgent need for ecologically sound reforestation and greening programs that preserve native biodiversity, restore degraded landscapes, and promote climate resilience. By prioritizing endemic species or those naturally occurring only in the Philippines and particularly suited to Leyte's ecological zones, this ordinance safeguards local ecosystems from the harmful effects of invasive and exotic species.

Moreover, this initiative embodies the constitutional principle of intergenerational responsibility, ensuring that future generations inherit a healthy, balanced environment. It also aligns with the province's commitment to sustainable development, community empowerment, and cultural integrity.

Through this ordinance, the Provincial Government of Leyte affirms its role as steward of the land, protector of biodiversity, and champion of ecological justice.

PROPOSED PROVINCIAL ORDINANCE NO. _____

**AN ORDINANCE INSTITUTIONALIZING THE EXCLUSIVE USE
OF ENDEMIC TREE SPECIES IN ALL TREE-PLANTING ACTIVITIES
WITHIN THE PROVINCE OF LEYTE**

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WHEREAS, the 1987 Philippine Constitution declares as a policy of the State the protection and advancement of the right of the people to a balanced and healthful ecology in accord with the rhythm and harmony of nature;

WHEREAS, Republic Act No. 10176 (Arbor Day Act of 2012) mandates the observance of Arbor Day and encourages tree planting as a civic duty and ecological imperative;

WHEREAS, endemic tree species are vital to the preservation of local biodiversity, the restoration of native forests, and the resilience of ecosystems against climate change and environmental degradation;

WHEREAS, the Province of Leyte recognizes its intergenerational obligation to protect and nurture the natural heritage of the land for the benefit of present and future generations;

WHEREAS, the exclusive planting of endemic tree species promotes ecological soundness, cultural identity, and sustainable development across all municipalities and cities within the province;

NOW THEREFORE, be it ordained by the Sangguniang Panlalawigan of Leyte, in session assembled, that this ordinance be enacted to mandate the planting, cultivation, and protection of only endemic tree species in all tree-planting activities within the Province of Leyte.

Be it ordained by the Sangguniang Panlalawigan of Leyte, in session assembled:

SECTION 1. TITLE - This Ordinance shall be known as the "Leyte Endemic Tree Planting Ordinance of 2025."

SECTION 2. DECLARATION OF POLICY - It is the policy of the Province of Leyte to promote ecological integrity, biodiversity conservation, and climate resilience through the exclusive planting of endemic tree species in all public and private tree-planting activities. This aligns with Republic Act No. 10176 (Arbor Day Act of 2012), the constitutional mandate of intergenerational responsibility, and the principles of sustainable development.

SECTION 3. DEFINITION OF TERMS

- *Endemic Tree Species* – Tree species naturally occurring and native only to the Philippines, particularly those indigenous to the Eastern Visayas biogeographic zone.
- *Tree-Planting Activities* – Any organized effort to plant trees, whether by LGUs, schools, CSOs, private entities, or individuals, including Arbor Day celebrations, reforestation, greening programs, and CSR initiatives.
- *Ecological Soundness* – The practice of ensuring that tree planting contributes positively to local ecosystems, avoids invasive species, and supports native flora and fauna.
- *PGNREO* – Provincial Government Natural Resources and Environment Office

SECTION 4. COVERAGE - This Ordinance shall apply to all municipalities and cities within the Province of Leyte, covering all tree-planting activities conducted in public lands, government facilities, schools, parks, roadsides, watersheds, and private lands.

SECTION 5. MANDATE - All tree-planting activities within the Province of Leyte shall exclusively utilize endemic tree species appropriate to the local microclimate, soil type, and ecological zone. The use of exotic, invasive, or non-native species is strictly prohibited.

SECTION 6. INTERAGENCY and LGU COOPERATION

- A. The PGNREO, in coordination with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), shall:

- Develop and regularly update a list of Leyte-endemic tree species.
 - Provide technical assistance, seedlings, and community education.
 - Monitor compliance and survival rates of planted trees.
- B. Municipal and Barangay LGUs shall integrate endemic tree planting in their Arbor Day celebrations, reforestation programs, and land use plans.
- C. Educational institutions shall incorporate endemic tree planting in their environmental activities and NSTP programs.

SECTION 7. IMPLEMENTING MECHANISM and MONITORING - To ensure the effective enforcement and sustainability of this Ordinance, the following mechanisms shall be instituted:

A. TREE PLANTING CLEARANCE SYSTEM

1. Clearance Requirement

- All individuals, organizations, developers, and LGUs intending to conduct tree planting activities within the Province of Leyte shall secure a Tree Planting Clearance from the Provincial Government Natural Resources and Environment Office (PGNREO) or the concerned Local Government Unit, whichever is applicable.
- The clearance shall specify the location, number of trees, species to be planted, and schedule of planting.

2. Clearance Conditions

- Only endemic tree species listed and approved by PGNREO shall be allowed.
- Planting sites must be ecologically appropriate and not conflict with existing land use plans.
- Applicants must commit to a minimum three-year maintenance and survival monitoring period.

3. Exemptions

- Small-scale ceremonial plantings (e.g., Arbor Day/LGU events, school events) involving fewer than 10 trees may be exempted, provided they use approved endemic species and submit a post-activity report.

B. ENDORSEMENT AND MONITORING

1. Pre-Activity Endorsement - All tree planting activities shall be endorsed by the Barangay LGU and reviewed by the Municipal ENRO or its equivalent office prior to clearance issuance.
2. Post-Planting Compliance Report - Within 30 days after planting, permit holders shall submit a Tree Planting Compliance Report detailing species planted, geotagged photos, and community participation.
3. Survival Rate Monitoring – PGNREO in coordination with DENR and the Local Government Concerned shall conduct annual survival audits for all planting sites. A minimum 80% survival rate shall be required. Replanting shall be mandatory for sites falling below the threshold.

C. DATABASE AND MAPPING

1. Provincial Tree Planting Registry
 - PGNREO shall maintain a digital registry of all tree planting permits, sites, species, and survival rates.
 - The registry shall be accessible to LGUs, CSOs, and academic institutions for transparency and research.
2. GIS Mapping - All planting sites shall be geotagged and integrated into the Provincial GIS system for monitoring, planning, and climate resilience mapping.

D. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND CAPACITY BUILDING

1. IEC and Training
 - PGNREO, in partnership with DENR and the concerned LGUs, shall conduct regular Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) campaigns on the importance of endemic species, climate justice, and intergenerational responsibility.
 - LGUs and schools shall be capacitated on species identification, nursery management, and monitoring techniques.
2. Youth and CSO Participation - Youth organizations, CSOs, and barangay-based groups shall be encouraged to adopt planting sites and participate in monitoring.

E. INTER-AGENCY COORDINATION

1. Provincial Tree Planting Oversight Committee - A multi-sectoral committee shall be created to oversee implementation, composed of representatives from PENRO, SP Committee on Environment, DILG, DepEd, CSOs, and Indigenous Peoples (IP) representatives.
2. Annual Review and Policy Update - The Committee shall conduct an annual review of implementation outcomes and recommend updates to the list of endemic species, planting protocols, and incentive mechanisms.

SECTION 8. INCENTIVES - LGUs, schools, and organizations that demonstrate exemplary compliance, innovation in endemic tree planting and survival rates shall be eligible for provincial recognition, technical support and grants subject to availability of funds, applicable accounting and auditing rules, as may be applicable.

Private landowners who voluntarily plant endemic trees shall be eligible for tax incentives subject to guidelines from the Provincial Treasurer and Assessor.

SECTION 9. PENALTIES - Any person or entity found violating this Ordinance shall be subject to:

- A fine of ₱5,000.00 per violation; and/or
- Mandatory replacement of non-endemic trees with approved endemic species; and
- Possible suspension of environmental permits, clearances or endorsements whichever is applicable.

SECTION 10. FUNDING - The Provincial Government shall allocate funds for the implementation of this Ordinance under its annual environmental budget, including seedling production, IEC campaigns, and monitoring systems.

SECTION 11. SEPARABILITY CLAUSE - If any provision of this Ordinance is declared unconstitutional or invalid, the remaining provisions shall remain in full force and effect.

SECTION 12. REPEALING CLAUSE - All ordinances, executive orders, or regulations inconsistent with this Ordinance are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SECTION 13. EFFECTIVITY - This Ordinance shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in a newspaper of general circulation and posting in conspicuous places within the Province of Leyte.