

Charcoal production in Mauritius

In Mauritius, traditional charcoal production has dwindled considerably. A few individuals hold the art of setting up earth kilns and the science of making charcoal. In 2020, it is estimated that 3 tonnes of charcoal was produced. Please see photos by Palmesh/ADD and the graph.

Charcoal production in tropical regions is reckoned to have devastating ecological and environmental effects.

Deforestation, especially on a small spatial scale, is one of the most destructive impacts along with the devastation of centuries-old fragile ecosystems. Traditionally, charcoal is made in traditional earth and pit kilns. The wood to charcoal conversion rate is about 20%.

However, the area used for charcoal production may recover rapidly provided a suitable forest management scheme is in place.

During charcoal production, the wood smoke released contains a wide variety of pollutants such as particulate matter that can transport microorganisms to the lungs, carbon dioxide, carbon monoxide, and volatile organic compounds.

