

## Innovative Agricultural Practices followed by Mr. Prakasham



Mr. Prakasham (65 years) studied upto S.S.L.C. and he has been working as transport supervisor in Kerala state transport corporation (KSRTC) and now retired and looking after agriculture in 7 acres of land in Cherthala, Alappula district, Kerala. For the last 8 years he has been following many sustainable, organic practices for growing vegetables, coconut and other garden land crops including spices. His son Mr. Akil who is marine engineer also helps his father during 6 months in a year (vacation time). In Kerala the cost of labour is Rs. 600/- per day and food also to be served by the farmer. Therefore the cost of cultivation is high and contribution of family members is much relevant to keep agriculture sustainable. He is conserving traditional varieties of vegetables and also distribute seed materials to the public by participating important exhibitions organized by different organizations. In this regard his innovative practices are given below :

### 1. Circular ridges for planting vegetable seedlings :



Circular ridges of about 3 to 4 feet height with 6 feet dia are made at 10 feet distance between the ridges. It is a raised bed for raising vegetables in order to avoid stagnating water during rainy season. This will avoid problems created due to excess moisture and also facilitating seepage of water for easy drainage. He is sowing red amaranthus, snake gourd, bitter gourd, beans, *kovaikai* (*Coccinia indica*). If he is planting bitter gourd in the first year then he will change the crop in the next year viz., Kovaikai, beans etc.,

### 2. Conserving traditional Bhendi variety :



He cultivates many traditional varieties of vegetables and he identified one traditional bhendi variety (Pachai bhendi) which is resistant to pest and disease and harvesting of pods prolonged upto 3 months (2 months in the modern variety). His variety fetches more prize (Rs. 5 extra per kg. due to good taste and look).

**3. Smoking (Fumigation) in the field for crop protection :**

For the vegetable crop grown in pandal system he developed smoking method of pest control which is very effective he claims. He is making smoking by using dried agricultural waste materials at every alternate days.

**4. Fish amino solution :**

Fish waste one kg. is put in vessel and added with jaggery one kg. and allowed for fermentation for 20 days. Now the whole materials dissolved completely and liquid is obtained. This is diluted with water by 10 times and spread over the crops and weekly interval for more nutrition and also providing immunity to the crop.

**5. Garlic neem oil solution :**

In a vessel take neem oil 150 ml. and added soap 100 gm. Then add garlic paste (garlic 200 gm ground well and made into a paste) and stirred well This is diluted 10 times and sprayed to crops for control of vegetable pests.

**6. Gomuthra solution :**

Take cow dung one kg., cow urine one liter, groundnut cake one kg. are placed in a vessel and allowed for fermentation for 10 days. Then the solution is diluted 10 times before spraying. It enhance growth of the plant.

**7. Tobacco extract :**

Leaves of tobacco 250 gm., soap 250 gm., are put in a vessel and 10 liters of water is added. Keep it overnight. Next day diluted with water 10 times and sprayed to crops are control of all insect pests in vegetables.

**8. Conservation of *Malai Inji* (wild ginger) :**

He conserving *malai inji* plants in his garden and the rhizome is used for treating cattle against bloat and digestive problems.



**9. Conservation of Kaattu Yanai Kizhangu :**

He is cultivating the plant as medicine for treating ulcer. Rhizome powder is used.



**10. Conservation of sembu (country Colacassia) :**



He is conserving this plant and distribute the seed material to the needy farmers.

### 11. Harvesting medicinal honey :



He developed innovative method of keeping holed mudpots for production of medicinal honey from mosquito honey bee. One hole is made for entering of honeybee into the mudpot. The mouth portion of the mudpot is covered with clay. The mudpots are hanged under the roof of the house as shown in the picture. He is harvesting honey 6 months interval.

### 12. Feeding the fish with locally available material :



He developed farm pond in 4 locations in the farm and fish variety viz., Malasiyanwala is raised. He is feeding them with coconut, groundnut cake, kitchen waste etc., Fish is harvested after 8 months of seeding. He some times recycling the pond water as spray to crops /irrigation for natural fertilization.

### 13. Biogas slurry for enhancing the growth of nursery seedlings :

Vegetables seedlings are raised in plastic tray after placing coconut coirpith soaked in biogas slurry. This enhances good growth of vegetables seedlings.

**Awards :** He received state level award for best Farmer for conservation of biodiversity and Rs 50,000 given by private Foundation during 2014.



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