

Organic farming in coconut

A success story from Gujarat

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Extraction of herbal hair oil from dry copra of coconut

Coconut is one of the important plantation crops of Gujarat state particularly in the coastal areas. The coconut plant is having high economic potential for coconut growers. The state enjoys 1600 kms of coastal belt (the highest for any state in the country) most suitable for coconut plantation. As per the statistics of 2018-19, the total area under coconut in Gujarat comes to around 26,910 ha having total production of 258.56 million nuts with the productivity of 9645 nuts/ha, thereby occupying the seventh position among Indian states in area and production whereas, fourth rank in productivity of coconut. About 60 per cent of the area and production of coconut comes from the undivided coastal districts of Junagadh, Bhavnagar, Valsad, Gir Somnath and Devbhumi Dwarka. The traditional area is predominant of tall varieties of coconut which thrive for more than 80 years. Coconut is considered as the cash crop of more than 5 lakh people residing in the coastal belt. In the state, coconut farmers are facing problems like fragmented holdings, scattered production, homestead nature of cultivation, lack of skilled manpower, incidence of pest and diseases, lack of adoption of scientific cultivation practices, lack of appropriate mechanization for harvesting and small scale processing and lack of awareness about improved technologies.

Many people have the perception that chemicals are not used in growing coconuts. Hence they think that all coconuts available in the market are organic or natural coconuts. There is a wrong belief that coconuts are mostly obtained from the wild in tropical countries, which is not true in organic coconut farming. For coconut cultivation inorganic chemicals are used worldwide. Hence not all coconuts are organic coconuts or natural coconuts. Inorganic fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides and fungicides are used in growing coconuts as well. For example, according to the Coconut Development Board India, rhinoceros beetle is the most common coconut pest in India. This can be controlled using chemicals such as phorate, naphthalene balls and carbaryl. But in organic coconuts, chemicals such as inorganic fertilizers, pesticides, etc. are not used. An organic coconut farmer uses organic means in growing the coconut palms. The organic coconut farmer who cultivates organic coconut has to ensure that the palms are cultivated organically in nature.

A successful experience of farmer on organic farming in coconut with intercropping of fruits is presented below.

Mr. Nareshbhai Save, of late Mr. Bhaskar bhai Hiraji Save from Deheri village of Valsad district

was a visionary and proponent of organic agriculture way back from 1965. Mr. Nareshbhai followed the techniques of his father and continued the tradition of organic cultivation. Today he is a respected farmer and gets invitation from many organizations for delivering lectures on organic agriculture. The Kalpavruksha farm established by Mr. Bhaskar H Save is a learning centre for farmers where training are organized regularly and the farm is open to farmers on all Saturday. The whole family of Shri Nareshbhai Save includes his wife, brother, daughter and all are involved in teaching the concept of organic cultivation to farmers. The farm has coconut (West Coast Tall) in 2 ha with 305 bearing and 25 young palms. The different fruit crops like arecanut, sapota, banana, custard apple and avocado with yams are intercropped in coconut garden. Need based irrigation through channels is followed with croton plants as soil moisture indicator (dropping leaves indicate moisture stress). He adopt zero tillage and no weeding, weeds are controlled by shade management and growing cover crops. The farm is under fully organic cultivation with no external input for the last 50 years. The nutrient supply is only through recycling of biomass. The entire biomass from all the crops except economically useful parts is returned to the farm. The field is rich in earthworms and according to him, the biomass gets composed within six months. Pest and disease



control is also done by biological methods taking advantage of natural food chain.

Value addition to the farm produce is an integral part of Mr. Save's philosophy of organic cultivation, where the products are also organic. He produces and markets herbal hair oil as 100 per cent chemical free. He owns a coconut nursery supplying quality seedlings to farmers and other nurseries. He is a well known farmer and trainer for many organizations like CDB, KVKs, agriculture and horticulture departments, AICRP on Palms (NAU, Navsari) and educational institutions.

Efforts made by him for disseminating organic coconut based production technologies among the farmers and awareness creation on organic cultivation are well recognized. Mr. Save produce more than 10000 good quality coconut seedlings of West Coast Tall and dwarf green variety throughout the year and is selling @ Rs. 50 per seedling to farmers and nurseries. From the nursery business, he is making an income of Rs.5,00,000/- rupees. He adopted coconut based cropping system organically and achieved production of tender nuts, as well as arecanut, sapota, banana, custard apple and brinjal with net return (economy) of Rs. 2,04,887per ha. The Save family received best coconut farmer award of CDB in 2006 and has also received many awards and certificate of appreciation for doing extra ordinary work in organic farming especially in coconut cultivation. ■



Mr. Nareshbhai Save's field visit with Dr. H. P. Maheswarappa, PC, AICRP (Palms)



Ayurveda's Immunity Boosting Measures for self care during Covid -19 crisis



Simple Ayurvedic Procedures

Nasal application : Apply sesame oil or coconut oil or ghee in both the nostrils (Pratimarsh Nasya) in morning and evening.

Oil pulling therapy : Take one tablespoon sesame oil or coconut oil in mouth. Do not drink, swish in the mouth for 2 to 3 minutes and spit it off followed by warm water rinse. This can be done once or twice a day.