

VERMICOMPOST - A BOON FOR DEVELOPMENT

Thane district, the green stretch of land lying on the coast of Arabian sea is a leading producer of chiku. In 2001- 2002 area under chiku cultivation in Thane district is 2826 ha. and production is 42500 tones. But due to unaffordable inputs like chemical fertilizers, pesticides and labour scarcity, farmers developed negative attitude for chiku cultivation. It is necessary to reduce the cost of labour and expensive inputs like chemical fertilizers and pesticides to the maximum extent.

Encouraging Experience:

Taking this in view, KVK, Kosbad Hill took demonstration in vermicompost with an innovative farmer Shri. Vinayak Bari, age 48, graduate in B sc chemistry, reside at Kankradi, Tal: Dahanu, Dist: Thane with a technical assistance from KVK, Thane, Shri. Bari constructed six vermicompost units and used worms of variety *Eisina foetida* obtained from KVK for the production of vermicompost. After attending regular training during the year 2001 and demonstration on vermicompost at KVK, he gained enough confidence in vermicompost production. He prepared sheds to rearing earthworms and prepared bed in chiku orchard-having size was about 10 feet long and width was 4 feet. In his orchard of 5.50 ha of chiku, he applied 10 - 15 Kg vermicompost per tree instead of 4 Kg sterameal and 15 - 20 Kg FYM per tree in the presence of KVK technical staff. By this he could save 60 - 70 percent cost of sterameal and FYM .



Preparation of vermicompost beds in sapote orchard

According to him the most important advantage of using vermicompost is that transporting is made easy which compared to cowdung. In case of cowdung it is very difficult for a farmer to hire any vehicle for transporting. Even if some one agrees additional payment has to be made for cleaning, loading and unloading of cowdung. Thus Shri. Bari could save a good amount of money, as there was no need of

additional labour to apply vermicompost, because it was free of foul smell and also it was in dried powdered form. He also said that, after six months, he got benefit of vermicompost in chiku orchard. The quality of fruits improved as well as increased in size of fruit. Shining and smoothness of fruits improved. He had found that qualities of leaves were improved and he was able to reduce the number of irrigation as compared to chemical fertilizers.

Thus, vermicompost has enabled this chiku farmer to continue with his chiku orchard by directly reducing inputs and indirectly increasing outputs.
