

Project Update

Fellowship Nammalvar

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Training in Organic Farming

- “Asha Garden”, Nammalvar’s farm used for training and practical demonstration of organic farming methods
- Training well attended by farmers statewide
- Lands degraded due to natural calamities converted into fertile lands within a year by his farming methods
- Methods focus on desalination on soil and increasing biodiversity thus improving soil health, fertility, animal fodder and food need seasonally
- Other topics discussed : how to maintain crop diversity, when to grow what crops, which insects are helpful/harmful for a particular crop/soil/bird ecosystem

Training in Organic Farming

- Conducted three day training on integrated organic farming methods for farmers from two voluntary groups : Vision 2020, Development promotion groups
- Invited and attended talks organized by Rotary clubs, Lions clubs, Colleges, schools and NGOs to increase awareness on bio-diversity, climate change, food safety and security and ecological farming
- Organic Farming workshops conducted in Nagercoil (TN), Vadakkancheri (Kerala), Hyderabad (AP), Thalavadi (Karnataka) for farmers group part of “Churches of South India”

Initiatives and activities

- Plant nursery established to address the needs of farming community
- Collaboration with local higher elementary school in Kadavur to make school campus green and encourage children to participate in creating the school garden
- Building soil fertility by growing wild indigo a self sown green manure crop
- Got 24 acres of land from friends and bought 35 acres of land for trial, experiments and training. Team members working on fencing, planning, designing and planting
- Increased efforts in Rain water harvesting methods to reduce dependence on rain every year. Help from public works department to help dig three rain water collection pools

Initiatives and activities

- Celebrated 5 day festival covering nature cure, herbal cure, acupressure, farming and environment; 3 team members attended training in healing with acupressure
- 700 farmers joined together to form Poison free food producers organization. The organization conducts training for farmers and gardeners and issues certificates
- Adopted method of “participatory guarantee” where groups of farmers vouch for each other to encourage organic farming of crops amongst a wider group and ensure credibility of methods used.
- Popularizing and selling harvest at green shops

Initiatives and activities

- Trying to ensure end to end system for organic farming initiative to ensure self sufficiency – owning seeds from previous harvest to selling harvest at green shops for all types of crops.
- Networking with Millet Network and South Action for campaign against genetic engineering of crops.
- Working with NGO “CREATE” to conserve and multiply 49 varieties of seeds and distribute among 500 farmers in state.

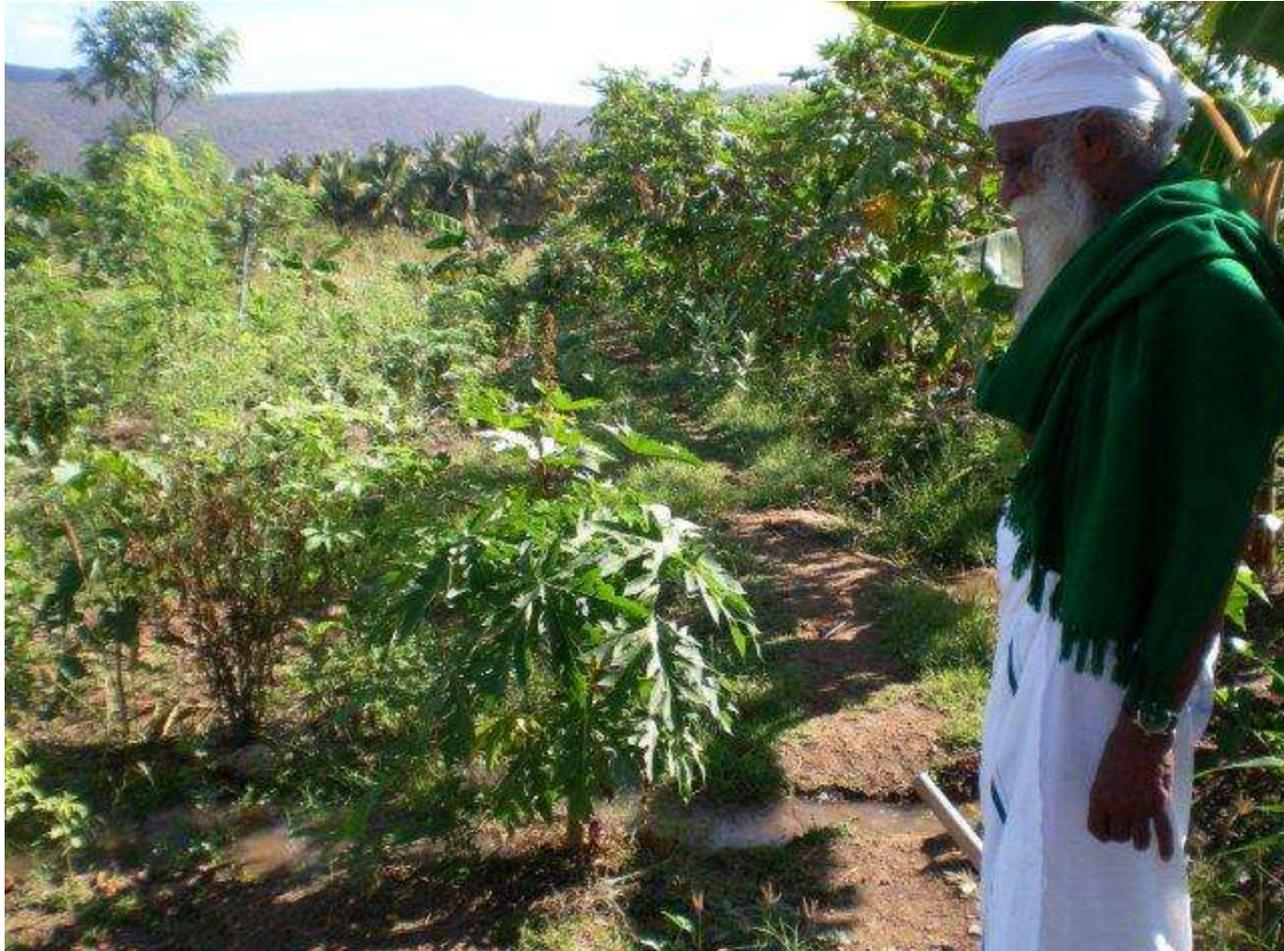
Documentation of organic farming methods and outreach

- Publishing articles every month in five monthlies
 - Friends in media circles and NGOs spread the word to larger sections of the society
 - Published two books in 2010
1. “Vayarrukku Choridal Vendum (We need to feed the stomachs” published using Asha Funds. NGO “Thanal” will publish English version of the book. Book deals with rice cultivation, manipulation by modern scientists and future prosperity
 2. “Thai Mun (Mother earth)” a Vanagam publication compiles subjects for a one year training course. Organic farming association of India to publish English version of the book

Documentation of organic farming methods and outreach

- “Thai Mun” used as curriculum in eco school near Kumbakonam and for Diploma in organic farming course started by Bharatidasan University in Trichy
- 3. “Uzhavukku Undu Varalaru” published by Anantha Vikatan (compilation of articles published in “Pasumai Vikatan”)
- 4. “Organic Farming Basics” booklet by Vanagam
 - Documenting events and developments using video cameras, CD to be made and circulated soon.

Activities



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Funds Disbursal (Jan-June 2011)

- Original Amount : \$ 2750
- Reduced funds: \$ 775