

Organic farming gets the STATE'S NOD

DNA Correspondent, BANGALORE

The chief minister BS Yeddyurappa has expressed his happiness about the initiatives taken by the Karnataka State Organic Farming Mission in popularising organic farming in the state.

"Our government has special priority for organic farming and hence, put the activities in this regard in 'Mission' mode," he said.

The CM was speaking after the Corporation Bank signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Karnataka State Organic Farming Mission for the promotion of organic farming on Wednesday.

As per the agreement, Corporation Bank, will be nominated as the preferred bank for financing farmers and other entities in taking up organic farming activities.

The CM said that for the first time in the country a nationalised bank had signed an MoU for such a purpose.

The bank would also assist the mission in setting up seed banks, marketing outlets, computer

training centres, libraries, goshalas etc, in all 176 taluks in the state.

The CM further said that for the first time in the country, a nationalised bank had signed an MoU for such a purpose and it would go a long way in the progress of organic farming in the state.

The Corporation Bank chairman and managing director, JM Garg, said that organic farming is

already catching up in states like Tamil Nadu and Uttaranchal and such a method of farming would extend help to small and medium farmers.

The chairman of the mission, Dr AS Anand, said that the day was very important and will go a long way in encouraging thousands of farmers who have taken an oath to follow organic farming in the state.

YOU MAY NOT HAVE MUCH SPACE, BUT EVEN YOUR TERRACE WILL DO FOR AN ORGANIC GARDEN

Go organic on your terrace

Elizabeth Soumya, Bangalore

Drop a seed on some soil, sprinkle some water and you'll have a giant beanstalk rising to the sky the next morning. Though you wish, an organic terrace garden doesn't really work that way. Giving us a better perspective is Dr B Narayan Vishwanath, the first person to author a book on organic terrace gardening in the country.

Having traded the stroll to the vegetable market with watering his organic kitchen garden, he feels that the positives of growing your own vegetables are too many to count. Apart from being healthy and cooling your home, at the heart of his inspiration is a serious concern: "The very food we eat may be poisoning us. Chemical fertilisers are used on the vegetables we find in the marketplace and the threat of genetically modified products also looms."

A steadfast campaigner of 'urban horticulture', he wants Bangaloreans to turn their terraces into their own vegetable patch. In one of his workshops on organic terrace gardening, he moves a step further from the academic lectures to getting his hands dirty and teaching people exactly how it's done.

Giving our stomachs a reason to be part of the endeavour, he first tempts with a long list of organic edibles that we can cultivate: gourds; leafy vegetables; and root vegetables. As if that hasn't already won us over, he adds fruit to the list: "Mango, orange, pomegranate, are just some of the fruit trees you can plant". Spices and medicinal plants can also be included by the ambitious grower.

Starting with the basics, Dr Vishwanath says, "The best pots are the earthen ones, 12-inch pots are best for vegetables. Bigger two-foot by two-foot cement cisterns are good for fruit trees and long rectangular pots are ideal to accommodate greens."

Soon, he answers a flurry of questions from doubt-infested minds. What about the soil? How much water to pour and when? What about sunlight? Taking on these queries, he continues, "Your growing media [soil] must be a combination of sand, dry leaves and corks [broken earthen pots]. Once you fill your pot with the mixture, pour water into it. If the water leaks out of the drainage hole, you're pot is ready."



ELIZABETH SOUMYA, DNA

GREEN FINGERS: BN Vishwanath is the first person to author a book on organic terrace gardening in the country

"Should I water my plants like this each time, till the water leaks?" Asks a doubting voice. "No! Water your plants with half a mug of water, approximately half a litre of water. Don't waste potable water, touch the soil in pots with the back of your hand, if you find the soil to be damp, you can skip watering for a day. Overdoing watering can also make it a breeding ground for mosquitoes."

He then talks about how important sunlight

is for growing vegetables. "You can't grow vegetables without sunlight. Period," he says bluntly. Leafy greens thrive in the shade. Your vegetables may seem like they are growing swiftly in the shade but you will have no produce without sunlight, two hours of sunshine can fill up a vegetable basket," he adds.

The workshop continues with a real demonstration — an amateur gardener who volunteers to try what's learnt, fills a pot with sand,

WHAT IS ORGANIC FARMING ALL ABOUT?

Organic farming is a form of agriculture that relies on crop rotation, green manure, compost, biological pest control and mechanical cultivation to maintain soil productivity and control pests.

Since 1990, the market for organic products has grown at a rapid pace, to reach \$46 billion in 2007.

Approximately 32.2 million hectares worldwide are now farmed organically, representing approximately 0.8 per cent of total world farmland.

In addition, as of 2007, organic wild products are harvested on approximately 30 million hectares.

A number of critics contest the notion that organic agricultural systems are more friendly to the environment and more sustainable than high-yielding farming systems.

Organic agricultural methods are internationally regulated and legally enforced by many nations, based in large part on the standards set by the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM), an international umbrella organisation for organic organisations established in 1972.

The organic movement began in the early 1930s and early 1940s as a reaction to agriculture's growing reliance on synthetic fertilizers.

compost and corks. A watering can is tilted on the testing ground. A minute later, water trickles out of the pot and work-shoppers cheer. An encouraging sign that we can do this to green-up our own cramped spaces. A much-needed lesson that can really put dinner on the table.

To attend an organic gardening workshop Contact AME foundation-26699512, 26699522, or e-mail leisaindia@yahoo.co.in

askthedoctor

Don't ignore that in-grown nail

It is caused by the sharp sides/side of the nail, usually of the big toe, cutting into the flesh of the nail fold. This produces pain and discomfort while walking, especially when you are wearing a shoe. In some cases, it leads to inflammation, infection and discharge from the nail fold.

WHAT are the symptoms?

- Painful nail edges.
- Swelling of the nail, folds with inflammation or infection of the nail and discharge of fluid.
- Sometimes, red flesh is seen growing out from the nail fold but this condition is very rare.

WHAT are the risk factors?

Hereditary deformity of the big toe can predispose an ingrown toe nail. It occurs in people who wear shoes all the time and also if the shoe is tight at the front.

If one wears socks of nylon material that do not absorb sweat, the feet become sweaty and if the individual has poor foot hygiene, it leads to an ingrown toe nail.

Cutting the nail down at the sides, into or close to the nail fold is another risk factor.

WHAT is the diagnosis?

- Consult a doctor to make sure that the blood supply to the foot is intact.
- One should not mistake deformed or thick nails that occur in diabetics for an ingrown toe nail.
- Blood sugar should be under control in diabetics.
- Discharge could be sent for culture tests if the doctor decides it is important based on his evaluation of the infection.
- It is called a 'Spotter' diagnosis.

WHAT is the prognosis?

- There is a possibility of a recurrence if any part of the nail bed is left on the side of the ingrowth.
- But the recurrences are small in number. The spread of infection into the foot could occur in diabetics and it could be a threat to the limb.

WHAT is the treatment?

- During the early stage, treatment is non-surgical and can be cured with extra care.
- Soak the foot in warm water every day and clean it with soap.
- Dry the feet after washing.
- Wear clean, cotton socks and wide fitting shoes.
- Clean the infected nail fold with a dilute antiseptic and keep some cotton wool under the affected nail edge.
- In infected toes, only the nail is avulsed or removed and the above mentioned methods are followed.

WHAT THE DOCTOR SAYS?

Maintain clean and dry feet.

Don't wear tight footwear, wear clean socks.

Make sure you have blood supply to the foot before undergoing an operation.

If you are a diabetic, follow your doctor's advice.

After the operation, be careful till the wound heals and the nail grows back properly before wearing shoes.

Dr MR Sreevathsa, MS, General Surgery, professor and HOD, department of general surgery, MS Ramaiah Hospital

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Vocational training is key for students

DNA speaks to Samiulla Baig, the regional director of South Asia for Edexcel International, about how vocational courses cultivate skilled manpower

Every year, there are millions of graduates who do not have specific skill sets required in the market. Though they are qualified from academic institutions, they will not be skilled at anything in particular. However, vocational courses train students to get the necessary skill sets.

Vocational education has diverse courses to meet the requirements of mainly the unorganised sector, and to instill self-employment skills in people through a large number of self-employment-oriented courses. Vocational education is imparted through Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) and polytechnics.

Most importantly, one of the weaknesses of the Indian education system is that it does not give due importance to vocational education. As a result, there is a mismatch between the skilled manpower required and skilled manpower available.

In vocational studies, students are tested and guided on not only identifying their skills, but also on improving them. Hence students, if they go through vocational training, can identify areas where they can explore their skills. It is time students debunked the myth that they will gain success only if they do specific courses.

This is not so and by the time they realise it, it is too late. While academia brands a student weak or clever, it is not required that the student who does not do well in his studies will not perform in the industry. Here, vocational training comes handy.

Vocational training helps students in overcoming problems of unemployment and can help children think beyond a graduation degree. For students, it is necessary in this competitive phase to know their skill sets by the time they graduate, so that they know which areas to look for.

In fact, an important aspect of India's rapidly growing economy is a skilled and educated workforce, and a demographic advantage over ageing Western societies. Technicians and other skilled workers and craftsmen form the backbone of manufacturing and infrastructure development.

Loyal donors are keeping charities afloat

With declining donations, city-based charities and trusts are having to rely heavily on their regular donors to keep them up and running

Rakshitha S, BANGALORE

Made a difference in the life of the underprivileged? Or is the recession holding you back? Have you thought of the life of the little one who is abandoned and does not have a home, or the little pup out in the cold that whines at your gate?

The recession is definitely having a knock-on effect on the charities in the city. With people being less philanthropic and more demands being put on charities, these trusts are facing a tough time coping with this recession. The 'people out-of-work and less money to spend' trend is taking its toll on charities.

Most charities have report a decline in income, triggered by the recession. "We are experiencing a lull in the donations sector. With our usual donors standing up for us, we are able to survive this cut-throat situation," says Sneha Sampath, managing director, Cherish Foundation. She adds, "We are in a recession, but seeing an increase in the

demand for our services. In times such as these, we require donations."

The charities are putting measures in place to protect their work and funds. Sudha Narayanan, a trustee of CUPA, an organisation for the welfare of animals, agrees: "We have definitely seen a tremendous fall in the donations that used to come in. Earlier, people would not think twice before funding animals. But now, we are finding it difficult. There is a downturn in the sponsorship for many of our projects and this is also slowing the pace of our improvement." She also adds that the support from regular donors has helped them through the tough times.

"The recession has not affected us in any way. People who donate are still there. I believe those who want to donate will do so, irrespective of their economic condition. They give, not because they have something extra with them, but because they believe in sharing and feel the need to donate. They know it would hurt if they did not put in their bit for our Trust," says Mary Paul, director, Vathsalya Charitable Trust.

Narasimhaiah, president, Sahana Charitable Trust, says, "We are not affected by the recession. Our regular donors have already donated for this financial year, though we have not received any extra donations this year. The recession may have its effect on us the next year, but as of now we are man-



DONATING HOPE: Many charities have been affected by the recession

aging pretty well with the funds we have got. There has neither been an increase nor a decrease in the funds that come in every year."

So with charities doing their best to give out their services, in spite of the recession, put your best foot forward and go out and do your bit for those less fortunate than you.

Sneha Sampath, MD, Cherish Foundation

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They're torn between survival and anxiety

With the recent turn of events in Nepal, the Nepali population in the city is worried about the future of their country

Indu Mathi S & Parandeep Singh, BANGALORE

No one knows what's next for Nepal. The resignation of Nepal's PM Pushpa Kamal Daahal Prachanda on Monday, just one day after his government's move to dismiss the army chief — that decision was eventually overturned — has left the Nepalese community in the city

worried. While there are no official figures on the number of Nepalese in Bangalore, their gradual migration to Bangalore for work, education and healthcare over the years has been significant. Many have also come to escape the political turmoil back home. This step by the government of Nepal has worried the Nepalese in Bangalore. They are concerned about the general well-being of their loved ones back home.

DNA spoke to a few Nepalese in the city regarding the issue and how they felt about the recent developments in their country. "The government has no right to sack any person of high authority without a concrete reason. It

cannot function according to its whims and fancies. The government is accountable to the public and must bear this in mind when they take any extreme action," says DB Thappa, president of the Gorkha Welfare Association, Bangalore chapter.

The condition in Nepal over the last few years has been very unfortunate with the Nepalese having to endure a series of ill-fated incidents. The recent incident only adds to the existing list of woes.

"The present government doesn't care about the welfare of the people. Many of us fled our homes to escape from the injustice committed

Arjun Bahadur, Nepalese national

The army chief is an influential person; one cannot just fire the chief without any appropriate reason. These situations are not only affecting the people in Nepal, but it can cause repercussions across the globe as well."

by the government. Now we are worried about our relatives and property back home," says a concerned Nepalese immigrant.

Many of the Nepalese in Bangalore are dissatisfied with the present conditions and they fear things will get worse.

B Suresh, who works in a restaurant, has been living in the city for a few years and feels the present government is acting according to its wishes without taking the public into consideration.

"Now that Prachanda has won the elections, he does whatever he wants. He will appoint or fire anyone and any time he chooses to," he adds.

"The army chief is a highly influential person; one cannot just fire the chief without any appropriate reason. These situations are not only affecting the people in Nepal but it can cause serious repercussions across the globe as well."

The world leaders now have to be wary of the rising dictatorial government in Nepal," says Arjun Bahadur, who works with a security agency.