

Drumstick production

Drumstick is cultivated in Dindigul and Karur districts of TamilNadu. It is marketed in Manmari and Ottanchatram markets. It is taken to Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Orissa and West Bengal. Since the usage of drumstick has increased in other districts, its demand is high despite high production. Mr. Mani of Puthupatti village explains about drumstick cultivation.

Annual Moringa and tree Moringa are the two types of Moringa grown. Mr. Mani is cultivating Annual Moringa. Moringa grows well in Red soil too. Annual Moringa comes to bearing in 6 months. It should be planted in April, May because drumstick fetches higher price in the months of November, December and January. Care should be taken to give proper irrigation and drainage. Annual Moringa has many high yielding types. The seeds should be tied up in a cloth and soaked in cow dung mixed with water or panchagavya for a day. The bundle can be tied to a stone so that it does not float.

Direct planting

It can be grown directly or by establishing nursery. In direct planting, furrows of size 6 * 7 feet are formed. In this pits of size 1 * 1 * 1 are formed. The pits are filled with red soil and Farm Yard Manure and the seeds are sowed at a depth of 2 inches. The seed requirement is 300gm / acre.

Nursery Method

Nursery bags are filled with sand, Farm Yard Manure, garden soil and red soil. The treated seeds are sowed at 1 inch depth and it should be watered daily using rose can. After germination, irrigation can be done once in 3 days. The seedlings are ready for transplantation within one month. The main field should be prepared by farming 6 * 7 feet furrows. In this 1 ½ * 1 ½ * 1 ½ feet pits should be formed. Apply 74M to those pits and plant the seedlings. Nursery method saves 100gms of seeds.

In both methods the soil surface should be kept moist always. The apical buds should be pinched to allow side branches. Moringa can be intercropped with watermelon, chilli, tomato, and bhendi. At the 3rd month of planting 100g urea, 100g super Phosphate and 50gm Potash should be applied to each plant. After this, 100g urea should be applied once in 6 months. The common pests and diseases are root wilt, flower drop, fruit drop, sucking pests and flies. The recommended control measures should be used regularly.

Yield in Annual Moringa :

Each tree gives 35kg of drumstick in 1 season. It yields well for 1 ½ years. Later it should be uprooted and new seedlings should be sown.

Yield in Tree Moringa :

Mr. Alagarsamy of Pallapatti is cultivating tree moringa in 5 acres. Normally tree moringa fetches less price than Annual moringa but it varies with taste and fleshiness. He is supplying high yielding tree moringa saplings and has given consulting for 2000 acres of Moringa. He explains the moringa cultivation.

The land should be ploughed well and moringa should be planted at a spacing of 18 * 12 feet. Each tree should be applied with 50g Azospirillum, 25g Phosphobacteria, 1kg Vermicompost, 25g Neem oil cake, little Panchagavya and EM solution. Pests can be controlled by using organic pesticides. The problem of gum exudation is minimal. When the plant grows the apical tips should be cut back to allow lateral branching. On the cut site, cow dung should be placed. Further application of fertilizers will produce flowers and fruits. Planting should be done only in ½ acre at the beginning, 6 months later the other ½ acre should be planted. This gives continuous harvests throughout the year. One acre can support 200 plants and they come to bearing in 6 months from the second bearing each tree produces 100kg of fruit (i.e.,) 20.000 kg from 1 acre. The minimum income is Rs.5/kg. (i.e.,) Rs.1 lakh / year. The cost of

production comes to about Rs. 15,000/- . Hence the net profit is Rs. 85,000/- per year. It yields for a number of years.

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