

**Farmers in Chidambaram take up gladiolus cultivation**

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Farmers in Chidambaram district, Tamil Nadu have been introduced to a new annual flowering crop called Gladiolus by the Annamalai University in association with State Department of Agriculture (Jammu & Kashmir). Since the crop is new to the cultivators of the region and many have never seen or heard about it, the University arranged a meeting recently and used slides and photographs to make them aware about the crop.

**Training:** Farmers from C.Mutlur village in the district were also selected and imparted training on the same. About 75 farm women and venturesome farmers participated in this awareness campaign. A demonstration plot for growing the crop in an innovative farmer's field was also taken up along with active participation from the local SHG members of the village. Four varieties of gladiolus namely American beauty, Summer sunshine, Candy man and White prosperity are presently being grown in the demonstration field. After the successful cultivation of gladiolus in the village another meeting was organized in which representatives from a local bank, different farm organization, women organisations of Cauvery delta participated. Doubts about the crop cultivation were dealt with in detail in the question-answer session and the bank also came forward to offer short-term farm loans to a tune of Rs. 50,000 without any collateral security to those interested to take up this cultivation.

**Success:** The success of this participatory exercise resulted in more farmers venturing into raising the crop in the subsequent seasons. A gladiolus growers club was also formed for transferring technologies through farmer to farmer extension mode and an annual award for the best cultivator was also instituted. At present with the available water facilities farmers belonging to growers club and Tamil Nadu Kisan Sabha ( TNKS) have established model farms in two villages of Chidambaram.

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