



Educating youth on alternatives

The need of the hour

Indian farmers are at the cross roads. Every year their problems are compounding owing to several reasons - degradation of natural resources like land, water, forests, climatic changes; vast variation in annual seasons; liberalized global trade policies etc. In India, the youth are no longer inclined to stay in rural areas and pursue farming. Thus, it is high time to train them in all aspects of farming like cultivation practices, alternatives for plant nutrition and crop protection, post harvest, value addition and marketing of agricultural produce, to make farming more remunerative.

Recently, I had a chance of training farmers on preparing their own inputs for crop production at a very economical cost. To improve the beneficial microbial population in degraded soils with the use of I.M.D (Indigenous Micro Organisms), all that one needs is 200 grams of steamed rice filled in coconut shells and covered with tissue paper with a thread or rubber band and buried under a tree with a conducive moisture for 75 to 85 hours. By this time white fungus grows all over the rice. This rice with the fungus is collected into a clean vessel without any moisture and mixed with equal amount of granulated jaggery and filled into a glass or porcelain bottle with a lid and kept in a cool dry place for 6 days. This I.M.O-2 with numerous beneficial organisms can be sprayed on crops and also soil at 2 ml in 1 liter of water. This spray can be used for 60 days from the time of its preparation. This spray helps in inoculating billions of micro organisms which help in improving soil health and resulting in healthy crop production.

Similarly, raw fish cut into 2 sq. cm. size mixed with equal amount of granulated jaggery for 12 days in glass or plastic container will release thick syrup free of any bad odour. This can be sprayed with water in the ratio of 4 ml per liter of water, (Spray every weak 5-6 times during vegetative growth). This spray provides nitrogen. To provide calcium and phosphorous, granulate 1 kilo of carbonized bone in 20 liters of water for 20 days and spray this tea mixed with 2 ml with 1 liter of water during flowering period, every 4 days. Similarly, tea prepared with 1 kilo of tobacco stems broken to 2 mm thickness and soaked in 20 liters of water for 20 days at the proportion of 2 ml in 1 liter of water provides enough potash during fruit formation and grain filling.

As a remedy against fungal damages for any crop, we can prepare paste with 1 kilo jaggery pounded together and fermented for 10 days kept in a cool and dry place in a suitable glass or plastic

container. Similarly, we can ferment 1 kilo ginger and 1 kilo jaggery pounded and together fermented for 10 days, kept in cool and dry place in a suitable glass or plastic container. Use one of these pastes mixed at 3 grams in 1 liter of water to check fungal attacks on any crop throughout the crop period alternatively every 10 days. We can prepare growth promoters by fermenting 1 kilo of banana shoot before the formation of leaf cut into small pieces and fermented for 10 days. Mixed with 1 kilo granulated jaggery, it can be sprayed at 2 ml with 1 liter of water, throughout the crop growth period.

There are lots of alternatives, which are not only eco-friendly but also inexpensive. We have to educate young farmers about such economic alternatives for promoting sustainable and healthy crops and make agriculture a profitable occupation.

Shri Narayana Reddy is a legendary organic farmer and is one of the most sought after resource persons on ecological agriculture.

L Narayana Reddy

Srinivasapura, Near Marelanahalli,
Hanabe Post-561 203, Doddaballapur Taluk,
Bangalore Rural District, Karnataka, India.
Mobile: 9620588974