

## **Novel method of raising seedlings in Chow-chow**

I am farming since 45 years. High cost of inputs and many side affects of chemicals made me to turn to organic way of farming. I manage about 6 acres of land and grow mainly arecanut, banana, sapota, mango, cashew, vanilla etc. I am a member of a Self Help Group called " Pragathi Swasahaya Sangha".

Owing to my inquisitive nature and curiosity to know more, I have tried out many new methods in cultivation aspects. One such method is raising "chow-chow" seedlings.

Chow-chow or Squash Chyote (*Sechium edule*) belongs to Cucurbitaceae family. It is a very popular vegetable in this region and both sweet and hot recipes are made out of this. Unlike other vegetables, this vegetable does not have a seed. Instead few fruits have single germ, which the farmers call as "tongue". Generally to raise this crop, the usual practice is to sow fruits with this tongue, in the soil. Many of these fruits sown do not germinate due to rotting.

One day, out of curiosity, I removed the germ from the fruit carefully with a knife (Fig 1). Then I placed the germ in a cup and filled half the cup with water (Fig 2). The water in the cup was changed daily. To my surprise, within 3-4 days, several roots were formed and the creeper was also coming up (Fig 3). It was kept in the cup for another 4-5 days during which the water was changed. Now, it was ready for planting in the soil (Fig 4).

By following this method, the vegetable can be used for cooking after removing the germ. Hence no wastage and loss.

I practice this method and raise about 10-15 seedlings for my kitchen garden. I do not do this on a commercial scale. But I have shared this information with other farmers and I feel many of them are following this. I have not tried such a method in other vegetables as I feel it cannot be done.

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