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மண்ணின் வளமே மக்கள் வளம்

பசுமை விகடன்

இன்சலின் இலை...
4 ஏக்கர்,
ஆண்டுக்கு
ரூ.12 லட்சம்!



மா, சப்போட்டா,
தென்னை...
ஆண்டுக்கு
ரூ.20 லட்சம்!



மல்லிகை, சந்தன முல்லை...
2 ஏக்கர், ஆண்டுக்கு ரூ.6 லட்சம்!

4 acres, Rs. 12 lakhs per year... Former Air Force Soldier involved in Insulin leaf production!

Jayakumar.TP. Kalimuthu

Venkat in the insulin plant garden



Diabetes is a disease that afflicts people all over the world. People suffering from diabetes are struggling to control their blood sugar levels. They follow various medical methods like English medicine, Siddha medicine, and Ayurveda medicine. The reason is that they believe that sugar will be controlled in some way. In that way, it is said that eating the leaves of the 'insulin plant' keeps blood sugar levels under control. Due to this, many people grow and use the insulin plant in herbal gardens and terrace gardens.

In this situation, Venkat alias Venkatesan, a former air force pilot from Pallavaram, Chennai, is attracting attention by cultivating this insulin plant on 4 acres, processing it into leaves, drying it and selling it in the form of powder, tea powder, and soup mix. His garden is located in Kaniyanur area near Arcot, Vellore district. We met him one morning while he was harvesting leaves from insulin plants that were cultivated as an intercrop in a coconut plantation.



Insulin leaf harvest

An idea found in America

"I am originally from Chennai. I retired from the Indian Air Force in the 1990s. After that, I worked as a recruiter for companies. My children have also done well in their studies and settled in America. My wife and I are here. We go to America every now and then to see our children. When I went to America once, I got the opportunity to visit an old age home there. An old age home is not like the one in our village. It is more like a club. There, the elderly play their favourite games, do exercises, do yoga, and discuss with each other.

There, an old woman was chewing a green leaf. When I inquired, she said, 'If you eat this leaf, your sugar level will be under control,' and showed me the leaf and said, 'This is the insulin leaf. Eat it and see. It has no side effects.' I was surprised that people in America knew so much about this leaf. I searched the Internet about this insulin plant. 'It is a plant native to Central and South America. It has anti-diabetic properties. It reduces blood sugar levels.' I found information that researchers had found that it is 'a plant native to Central and South America. It has anti-diabetic properties. It reduces blood sugar levels.' There are many people abroad who know about its benefits. I also heard that there are people who like to eat it. I decided to produce it ourselves," said the person who gave the introduction, talking about the insulin plant.



Harvest and bundle...

Shady land is suitable.

“Insulin plant is called ‘surull inchi keera’ in Tamil or Spiral Ginger in English. It grows well in shady, moist lands. It is commonly seen in gardens in Kerala. There are three varieties, *Costus Pictus* (yellow flower), *Costus igneus* (red flower), and *Costus species* (white flower). Of these, ‘*Costus Pictus*’ is the best.

I started cultivating insulin plant in 2014 with this variety. I bought 500 seedlings from Kerala at a price of Rs. 25 per seedling and planted them. I first cultivated it in another place. But, it did not grow due to the lack of suitable climatic conditions. Only later did we lease this land, which is densely covered with coconut trees, and start cultivating it as an intercrop. Since the shade of the coconut trees was good.

The plants have taken root well and started growing. Since the leaves can be used as medicine, we cultivate those using organic farming methods. We have also obtained an organic farming certificate. Only shady land is suitable for growing them. They can be planted at a distance of 5 feet by 5 feet. If you plant 1 plant, it will branch into 5 to 10 plants. We need to water it once a week. 1 plant grows up to 6 feet tall. We mainly feed them with Tozhuvuram and Panchakavya. So far, there has been no pest attack.



Solar tent dryer

Branching through lateral nodes

It is like a banana tree. Once planted, it can be harvested for many years. The side nodes of the plant will continue to branch. After 9 months of planting, it can be harvested. The leaves can be picked continuously for about 5 years. Once a mature plant flowers, the plant will wither. After that, the plants will continue to branch and grow from the nodes on the sides. During the rainy season, it is not possible to go into the garden. It will grow to that extent," he said, taking us to the value-added hall operating in Pallavaram, Chennai. He has set up the value-added hall in a part of his house. There are various machines there, such as a cooling room for collecting green leaves, an extractor for extracting juice from the leaves, a pulveriser for grinding dry leaves into powder, a packing machine, a sealing machine. There is a solar tent dryer on the floor and a warehouse for collecting dried insulin leaves.



Green leaf dried leaf powder

Venkat, speaking as he showed it, said, "I go to the farm only once a month. Otherwise, I harvest from there, dry it, pack it and send it to Pallavaram. I also sell green leaves. I dry the leaves and grind them into powder, tea powder and juice and sell them at a high price. I have installed 4 solar tent dryers on the farm and one here to dry the leaves. We can harvest once every 45 days from a plant. There are 75,000 plants spread across 4 acres. We will harvest 300 kg in a rotation once a week. We will dry the harvested leaves on the farm and bring them here as dried leaves. We will dry them lightly before grinding them and then grind them. Depending on the orders, we will grind them into powder, tea powder and soup mix and send them in packets," he said, talking about his income.



Venkat in the insulin plant garden

Has a sour taste.

“If you put this leaf in your mouth and chew it, it will taste sour like eating a tamarind leaf. The leaf is thicker than the leaf of a tamarind tree. It has more water content. They buy more green leaves. They buy it mostly from foreign countries like America, Germany, and England. That is why we export a lot. In addition, I have obtained certificates for nutritional values, certificates for export, MSME, Organic Certification and laboratory test certificates. We send it as green leaves to those who take it as green leaves.

This is bought exclusively by diabetics. Even healthy people can eat it. Doctors and high-ranking officials buy it. We sell it through our website and Amazon. We are planning to sell it as fresh leaves through Zepto and Big Basket as soon as possible. At present, the business is worth Rs 36 lakhs per year. 10 people are working in value addition and insulin cultivation. After paying their salaries, transportation, rent, and electricity expenses, we are getting a net profit of Rs 12 lakhs per year,” he said in a satisfied tone.



In the process of extracting juice

“People who know about it in India are buying it and consuming it. Even allopathic doctors are buying it. Many people are taking it because it has no side effects. We have to find a market for it. We have to manufacture it in a good way and have an office in an area with courier and postal services that can send it to foreign countries immediately. We have to obtain all the necessary certificates for this. We also have to know e-commerce methods. Most importantly, we need investment. If all these are put together, insulin plant cultivation will be profitable,” he said, bidding farewell.

For contact, Venkat,

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1 kg of dry leaves yields 900 g of powder.

“If you grind 1 kg of green leaves and extract the juice, you will get 700 ml. If you dry 16 kg of green leaves, you will get 1 kg of dried leaves. If you grind 1 kg of dried leaves, you will get 900 grams of powder. I sell insulin juice in 500 ml bottles. We sell the powder in 250 gram packets. We grind it thoroughly and prepare it to drink as tea. Insulin leaf juice can be mixed with dosa and chapatis. It can also be taken as juice and soup. Green leaves can be eaten 2 times a day. You can drink the powder in the amount of 1 spoon in hot water. You can also chop the leaves and eat them as a salad. You can also boil 1 spoon of insulin tea powder in 200 ml of water and drink it as tea. These valuable powders and juices can be kept and used for up to 1 year,” says Venkat.



With valuables

If it works, you can take it.

When talking to Siddha doctor Meenakshi Sundaram, a professor at the National Siddha Medical Research Institute in Tambaram, Chennai, about the insulin plant, she said, “Diabetics use various medical methods to control their sugar levels. They believe that eating onions will keep their sugar levels under control.



Meenakshi Sundaram

There are people who grind bitter gourd and consume it as juice. They take stevia (Shini Tulasi). They also take the leaves of the insulin plant in the same way. Whatever herbs are taken, the important thing is whether the body of the person who eats it accepts it, whether it is effective, and whether it has no side effects. In this way, insulin leaves can be taken,” he said.

The reason for the name insulin

Although it is called the insulin plant. This plant does not contain any insulin. It does not stimulate the production of insulin in the human body. It plays a role in reducing blood sugar. This prevents an increase in blood sugar. Doctors say that it may have been named insulin because it is used in diabetes medicine. They also say that it is good to seek the advice of a doctor before taking it.