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PHONE : 03192 230269/230230 • FAX : 03192 234325 • e-MAIL ID : echopress4@gmail.com and echoofindia.com / news@echoofindia.com



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SPICES FOR BETTER PROFITS AND HEALTH

ICAR-CIARI demonstrates scientific spices cultivation to SHGs



PORT BLAIR, SEPT 20/-- / A demonstration programme on Cultivation of spices as profitable inter crops was organized under All India Coordinated Research Project on Palms Project on September 18, 2021. Spices are amongst the most suitable crops for commercial scale cultivation in the islands. However, technological interventions are required to get the produce of desirable quality. During the inaugural programme,

Dr. E.B. Chakurkar, Director, ICAR-CIARI, emphasized upon adoption of scientific practices for reaping maximum benefits from spices cultivation. He suggested the participants to undertake value addition of produce for improving the profitability of the sector. Considering the issues faced in marketing, he urged the youth to play pivotal role by utilizing the digital tools and platforms.

Dr. Ajit Arun Waman,

Scientist in Charge of the Project, explained potential of various herbal, rhizomatous and tree spices as intercropped and sole crops in the islands. He emphasized on use of improved varieties of spices for getting produce of uniform quality. Various propagation techniques such as cuttage, marcottage, serpentine propagation and graftage, which are adopted for multiplication of various spices were demon-

strated in the Horticultural Plants Propagation Unit of the Institute. Participants were educated about scientific practices for production and processing of cinnamon, lemon grass, long pepper, Indian bay leaf, woody pepper, black pepper and bush pepper. Field visits in the experimental gardens of coconut and arecanut based cropping systems involving spices were also made for the benefit of the stakeholders.

Considering the importance of spices in home remedies and in the preparation of decoctions/ kadha for improving the immunity during COVID-19 pandemic, use of various spices was also explained to the participants. Promotion of spices based herbal teas such as lemon grass, pepper etc. in the islands could not only help the small growers in getting the revenues but would also open up healthy options to the consumers, Dr. Ajit said. At the end, planting material of various spices was distributed for encouraging participants to take up cultivation of spices. The programme was attended by participants from three self-help groups from South Andaman along with island youth.