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Get ready for soil-less cultivation

Special Correspondent

The system uses alternatives to soil such as sawdust

BANGALORE: If you think that you cannot grow plants without soil, you are wrong. Soil-less cultivation and gardening has been a success in 21 countries. What is more, it will soon find practitioners in Bangalore.

The system, which is convenient for areas where availability of land is low for conventional cultivation and gardening, uses materials such as saw dust, gravel, groundnut shell or rice husk as alternatives to soil. Cultivation is done usually in huge trays and the hydroponic mediums are designed to be very porous for retention of air and water.

This method is suitable for gardening and cultivation of vegetables, fruits, flowers and herbs.

A separate stall regarding the theoretical aspects of soil-less cultivation has been put up at the Krishi Mela organised by the University of Agricultural Sciences, Bangalore, on its campus.

Lieutenant Commander (retired) C.V. Prakash, who is trying to promote the soil-less cultivation method in Bangalore, says that the method of cultivation uses only one-tenth of water which would be used under the normal cultivation system. The yield is also more than the conventional method, claims Lt. Cdr. Prakash, an ex-Naval officer. According to him, soil-less cultivation is advantageous in several ways as it would be free from soil-born diseases and weeds.

There is no need to use chemical pesticides. In fact, the cultivation method would be organic as neem spray and garlic spray would be used as alternatives to pesticides. Besides, the cultivation system itself is portable.

According to him, this method can also be used by the urban householder to grow vegetables for domestic consumption. This would not only help people get good quality and nutritious vegetables, but also prevent them from paying heavy prices for vegetables in the market.

It is also possible to take up cultivation of community gardening in apartments and colonies, he notes.

He says that this method can be adopted by poor families both in urban areas and villages. This can help fight the problem of hunger to an extent, he claims. Cuba has been practising this intensively by encouraging people to take up cultivation of two million soil-less gardens.