



GOVARDHAN ECO VILLAGE

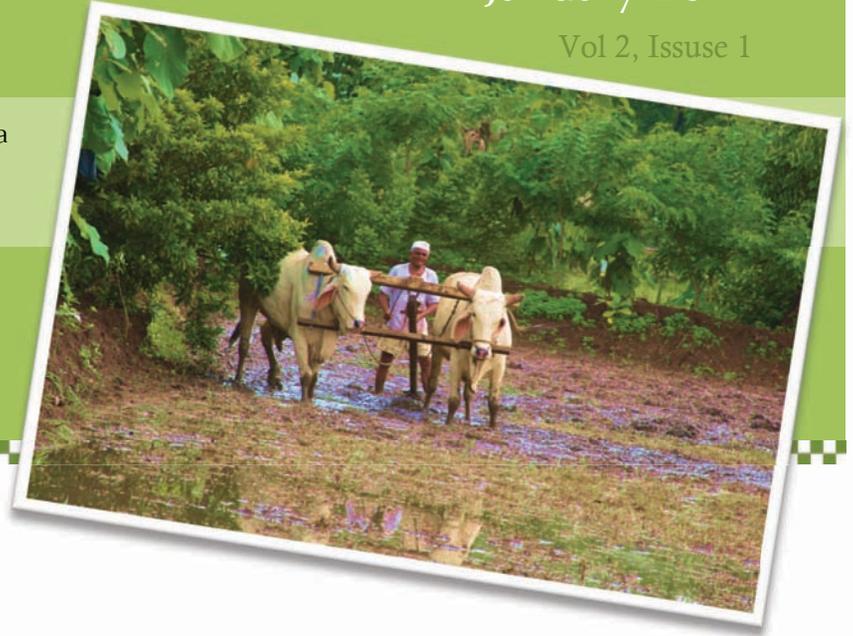
Newsletter

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Dedicated to His Divine Grace, A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, Founder Acharya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness

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Inside

- Page 2 Organic Farming: Crop Rotation
- Page 3 GEV Rice Plantation Report 2010
- Page 4 Benefits of Turmeric
- Page 5 Farm Fresh: News & Events from GEV.

Happy New Year!

Govardhan Eco Village wishes everyone a prosperous and Eco friendly New Year. We begin the New Year with a new look and exciting series of articles. This year 2011 has officially been declared by the United Nations as the International Year of Forests. This is to raise awareness and strengthen the sustainable forest management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests, for the benefit of current and future generations. Forests, which are the lifeline for over 1.6 billion people today, are fast depleting due to massive deforestation. Lets do our bit in saving this most precious gift of Mother Earth.

The control of the Lord is everywhere, and if the Lord is pleased, every part of nature will be pleased... the forest will supply sufficient wood, drugs and vegetables, and the seasonal changes will effectively help produce fruits and flowers in profuse quantity.

- Srila Prabhupada.





Crop Rotation

Last month the importance and scope of Organic Farming was highlighted. This month's article discusses one of the most important practices in Organic farming – Crop Rotation.

Crop rotation is a time tested agricultural strategy that has been in use for centuries. Once can find its reference in many ancient scriptures in Vedic Indian, Roman and African civilizations. During the Green Revolution, this traditional practice of crop rotation was replaced by the practice of monoculture or single crop cultivation where in chemical inputs are provided to the soil for supplementing the nutrient loss. However the drawbacks of monoculture farming have become apparent today, notably from the perspective of sustainable agriculture and the risk of catastrophic crop failure.

Crop rotation is a systematically planned cultivation cycle that involves growing plants of different taxonomic families on the same plot of land over sequential seasons. Usually

extending over a period of 3-4 years, the choice and sequence of rotation crops usually depends on the nature of the soil, the climate, and rainfall of that particular region.

Benefits of Crop Rotation:

Crop rotation has many fold benefits. Firstly, it prevents depletion in soil nutrition that occurs due to repeated cultivation of same crop. Plants like legumes when cultivated in rotation restore the nitrogen content in the soil, thus preventing the usage of chemical based soil replenishing agents. This simple technique not only maintains soil fertility but also improves the yields in comparison to land that do not use rotation.

The second advantage of crop rotation is the natural disease

and pest control it offers. Crops of same family tend to have similar pests and pathogens. By repeatedly growing the same crop, the pathogens and pests buildup increasing the risk of soil borne pests and diseases.

By rotating the crops and changing the planting location, the pest cycles can be broken



or limited, thus the usage of dangerous chemical pesticides can be completely avoided.

Continued in Page 4

GEV Rice Plantation 2010

Rice, the staple diet of most of the populace in India, is slowly losing its diversity. Owing to commercial interests, only a few select varieties of rice are being cultivated today leading to extinction of hundreds of rare varieties. In an attempt to save these rice varieties, the agriculture team in GEV has carefully collected various native rice seeds from all over Maharashtra and cultivated with an intention of creating a seed bank and saving them from extinction.

Taking up this exercise during the recent Monsoon, GEV did rice plantation in a larger scale as compared to the previous years. The yield also has been quite remarkable, in spite of the irregular rains. A total number of 67 varieties of rice have been planted. These included 52 rare varieties of rice planted in small scale, specifically for research purpose and another 15 of both Garvi and Halwar varieties in large scale. The Garvi breeds are high water consuming varieties while the Halwar are less water consuming.

The plantation of the 52 rare varieties of rice was done in collaboration with BAIF. These were selected for research purpose, from a large number of varieties of paddy seeds. Using selection methods, the best quality of seeds would be extracted among these 52 varieties. The criteria for best seed selection, popularly

known as Elite seed selection is briefed as follows.

Elite seed selection

The Elite seed selection is done in several stages. First the external features of the paddy are observed. Any offshoots, weeds and pinnacles of other varieties of plants are removed. Then the pest and disease infected pinnacles are removed. Finally Immature pinnacles are eliminated. Then the best clump is selected based on the following criterion:

- Number of effective tillers
- Clump strength
- Pest and disease resistance
- Length of pinnacles
- Filled Vs. unfilled grain ratio
- Maturity of grain
- Height of plant.

The 15 varieties planted on a larger scale were cultivated over an area of 10 acres.

These include 13 of Garvi variety rice namely Zini, Govinda Bhoga, Kolapi, Sidhagiri, Pusa Sugandha – 1121, Pusa Sugandha – 1401, Black buma, Telosingh, Kalagira, Maihsur Maileg, Kasabai, Old Kolam and Patani; and 2 of Halwar rice varieties namely Padma



BENEFITS OF TURMERIC



Turmeric, one of the most commonly used herb in Indian cuisine, is a wonder drug from Mother Nature. It contains Curcumin, which can prevent cancer and detoxifies the liver. Known for its powerful healing capacity, this natural antiseptic and antibacterial agent has been in use for ages in traditional Ayurvedic and Chinese medicine. Turmeric can be consumed as pills or in cooking by all except people having gallstones or bile obstruction.



Crop Rotation, Continued from page 2

Weed control is also enhanced as many perennial weeds are destroyed in the process of crop rotation. Crop rotation also has other benefits like improving the soil tilth & structure, Soil moisture improvement, soil erosion reduction etc.

Steps in Crop Rotation:

The first step in crop rotation is identifying the various families of crops that are to be cultivated. A simple list of plant families is shown below:

Family Common names

Allium: Chive, garlic, leek, onion, shallot

Cucurbit (Gourd family): Bitter gourd, bottle gourd, chayote, cucumber, ivy gourd, luffa gourd, melons, pumpkins, snake gourd, squash, wax gourd

Crucifer (Brassica): Bok choy (petchay), broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, Chinese cabbage, cauliflower, collard, kale, kohlrabi, mustard, radish, turnip, watercress

Legume: Common beans, black bean, broad bean (Fava), clover, cowpea, garbanzo, hyacinth bean, kidney bean, Lima bean, lintel, mungbean, peanut, pigeon pea, pinto bean, runner bean, snap pea, snow pea, soybean, string bean,

white bean

Aster: Lettuce, artichoke
Solanaceous (Nightshade family): Potato, tomato, pepper, eggplant

Grains and cereals: Corn, rice, sorghum, wheat, oat, barley, millet

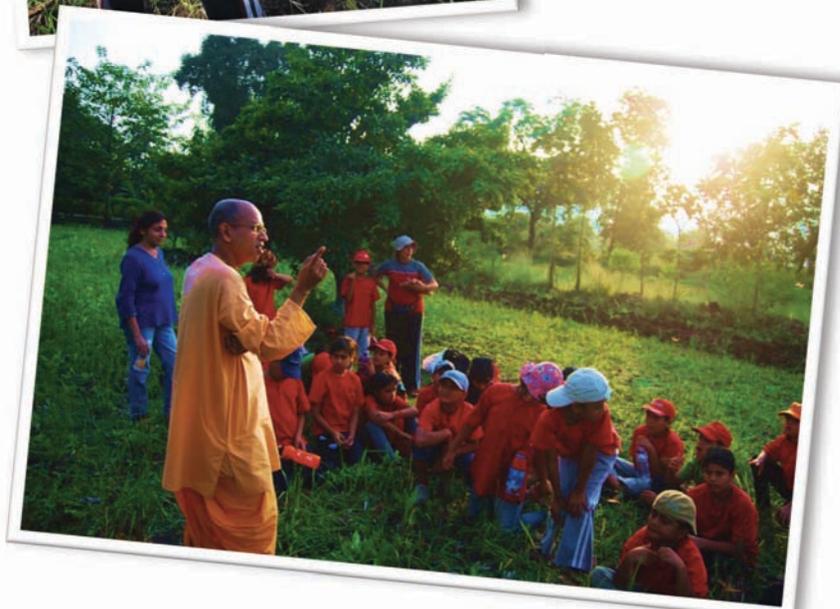
Carrot family: Carrot, celery, dill, parsnip, parsley

Root crops: Cassava, sweet potato, taro, yam, water chestnut

Mallow family: Cotton, okra
The first season of planting could be devoted to leafy



plants, the next season to fruits, followed by the root plants and then legumes. Legumes are to be grown before grains or cereals. Practice green manuring. At first Crop rotation may seem tedious to plan, but by carefully maintaining crop records, it can help boost yields with out using chemicals there by creating a sustainable organic farming practice.



Farm Fresh: Visit by Tridha

Last month Govardhan Eco Village hosted the students of class III from Tridha Rudolf Steiner School for a two-day educational visit. Based on the famous Waldorf Education model, the Tridha Rudolf Steiner School teaches its kids not to learn by rote, but by real understanding by thinking, feeling and experiencing. So set out to experience a real village lifestyle the kids accompanied by their two instructors visited GEV. During their visit HG Sanat Kumar Prabhu from GEV addressed the kids about the significance of village lifestyle and briefed them about a few aspects of organic farming. Later on the kids prepared a soil bed and planted a few vegetables, getting a first hand experience in farming. Touring the farm, they visited all the farming zones in GEV and studied the various organic farming practices followed here. The kids also visited the GEV Goshala and Biogas plant and learned about the various benefits of cows and significance of cow protection. Also having lots of field exercises the kids from Tridha had a delightful learning experience at GEV.