

INTENSIFIED HOME GARDENS PROGRAMME

The Ministry of Agricultural Development & Research has decided to intensify the home gardens programme. Initially this programme will be launched in the Wet zone districts, where population is very high.

Objectives of the Programme:

Vegetables are important and useful sources of proteins, minerals and vitamins that are essential components in a balanced diet. Vegetables are grown in specialised areas in the rural sector (often far removed from the Centres of consumption) With the increasing high cost of production and transport as well as marketing difficulties certain vegetables are beyond the reach of the poor people. This home-gardens programme primarily aims to meet the domestic requirements of vegetables, fruits (and spices such as chillies and onions). The general objectives of the programme are :-

1. To grow and produce vegetables in home gardens to enable preparation of a balanced-diet to improve the nutritive value of daily diet of people.
2. To reduce expenses for the purchase of vegetables, spices and leafy vegetables that could be raised easily in Homegardens, especially during the off seasons when prices are high.
3. To provide a cheap source of fresh vegetables free of pollution with agro-chemicals.

Target groups to be reached:

The programme aims to reach the following target groups.

1. Urban people in cities and towns where population densities are high.
2. Slums and shanty dwellers, among this group malnutrition is high and they need a cheap and nutritive source of vegetables.

The first step:

The Assistant Directors of Agriculture (Extension) in consultation with relevant authorities will identify the target areas and launch the programme in those selected areas. On the basis of the resources of land and water available, three types of home gardens can be identified as follows:-

- a) Where land holdings are large (about 1/4 to 1 acre).
- b) Where land holdings are limited (20 perches or less)
- c) Flats, slums and shanty dwellers who have no land to cultivate.

The type of crops to be grown, methods of raising these crops will vary between these groups. For those in the group it is proposed to help them to raise their crops in pots, windows boxes and polythene bags etc.

Extension Programme:

1. The existing extension staff (A.II & K.V.SS) in the selected areas will visit the house holders regularly on a scheduled programme of visits to advise them. They will organise group meetings, demonstrations etc. and make available planting materials.

2. The programme will be monitored by the segment A.OO and Assistant Director of the district. One A.O. will be stationed in each district to plan and execute the home garden programme as one of his specific duties.
3. In all districts where Farm Women's Agricultural Extension A.II are available their services will be utilized as S.M.OO to train the field extension staff on home gardening. They will participate in fortnightly training of field extension workers. Where A.I. (F.W.A.E.) are not available the S.M.O (Other Field Crops) will undertake this training. They will also train staff on the nutritional value of crops that can be grown in homegardens.
4. The Cultivation Officers of the Agrarian Services Department will be utilized for this programme. They too will be trained in home gardening.
5. At Headquarters, each Additional Deputy Director will be responsible for the home gardens programme in the districts that come under their purview. The programme in Colombo, Gampaha and Kalutara Districts will be co-ordinated by a Senior Agricultural Officer from Headquarters. The A.OO (F.W.A.E) and Y.F.C. will co-ordinate the activities of their respective staff.
6. The services of voluntary organization like Rural development Societies, Kantha and Mahila Samithies, Rotary, Lions, Jaycees Clubs and others will be used..

7. Radio and Television Programmes will be used to give publicity to this programme by using communication programmes.
8. Simple leaflets in all three languages will be prepared for distribution to those who engage in home gardening.

Supply of Seeds and Plant Materials:

Seeds: The Department of Agriculture will have small packets of seeds available for sale to home gardeners at reasonable prices.

Planting Material:

- (a) In those crops where the crop is established by transplanting seedlings (for example chillies, brinjal and tomato seedlings will be available for purchase from extension centres, agricultural service centres, and other outlets.
- (b) In those crops where propagation is by vegetative methods, planting materials will be made available at extension centres and sales outlets.
- (c) For large scale home gardeners planting materials of fruit plants will be made available in addition to vegetable planting materials.
- (d) For flat and shanty dwellers plants raised in pots and ploythene bags or necessary guidance will be provided.

Planting materials will also be available from the following sources.