

Kota farmer develops mango variety that bears fruits round the year

Shrikishan Suman (55 years), a farmer from Kota, Rajasthan, has developed an innovative mango variety which is a regular and round-the-year dwarf variety of mango called *Sadabahar*, which is resistant to most major diseases and common mango disorders.

The fruit is sweeter in taste, comparable to langra and being a dwarf variety, is suitable for kitchen gardening, high-density plantation, and can be grown in pots for some years too. Besides, the flesh of the fruits, which is bourn round the year, is deep orange with sweet taste, and the pulp has very less fiber content which differentiates it from other varieties. The bountiful of nutrients packed in mango are immensely good for health.

Poverty led Shrikishan, the brain behind this mango variety, to drop out of school after class two and take up the family profession of gardening (*Mali*). He had an interest in floriculture and orchard management while the family was focused on growing wheat and paddy. He realised that the success of crops like wheat and paddy was dependent on external factors like rainfall, animal attack, and so on, limiting their profits.

He started growing flowers to augment family's income, the first ones being different varieties of roses, and sold them in the market. Along with this, he started growing mango too.

In 2000, he identified a mango tree in his orchard with an appreciable growth trend, dark green colored leaves. He noticed that the tree bloomed round the year. On observing these traits, he prepared five grafted mango plants using it as a scion. It took him about fifteen years to develop this variety by preserving and preparing the grafts. He noticed the grafted plants started bearing the fruits from the second year of grafting itself.

The innovative attributes of the variety have been verified by the National Innovation Foundation (NIF), India, an autonomous institution of the Department of Science & Technology, Government of India. NIF also facilitated an on-site evaluation of the variety through ICAR - Indian Institute of Horticultural Research (IIHR), Bangalore, and a field testing at SKN Agriculture University, Jobner (Jaipur), Rajasthan. It is in the process of being registered under the Protection of Plant Variety and Farmers Right Act and ICAR-National Bureau of Plant Genetic Resources (NBPGR), New Delhi. NIF has also facilitated the plantation of *Sadabahar* mango variety in the Mughal Garden at Rashtrapati Bhawan in New Delhi.

For this evergreen variety developed, Shrikishan Suman was conferred the NIF's 9th National Grassroots Innovation and Traditional Knowledge Award and subsequently recognised at various other fora. Through various channels, NIF has been making efforts towards dissemination of the information about the variety amongst farmers' networks, government organisations, state agriculture departments, NGOs, etc.

Shrikishan Suman received over 8000 orders of *Sadabahar* gratings from India and abroad during 2017- 2020. He supplied over 6000 plants to different farmers spread across the states of Andhra Pradesh, Goa, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Kerala, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Tripura, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, West Bengal, Delhi and Chandigarh during 2018-2020. Over 500 plants were transplanted at Krishi Vigyan Kendras, and research

institutes in the states of Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh by the innovator himself, and over 400 grafted plants were provided at different research institutes in Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, and Gujarat.

