



Consolation Award

Souwriyamakkal: Improved Nutmeg Variety

Roy Mathew
Idukki, Kerala
Scout: PDS

Roy Mathew (57) a history graduate and a progressive farmer from Idukki has developed a nutmeg variety Souwriyamakkal identified for its good quality mace. He has been involved in farming for the last forty years and cultivates nutmeg and cocoa as main cash crops in his 10 acres of land. He has a keen interest in experimenting at his field for improvement in yield and quality produce of different spice crops.

During 1995-97, the market price of rubber had fallen drastically so he shifted to nutmeg cultivation. Then he had planted a hundred seeds of different unknown varieties. In 2000, he observed that all new plants were male and therefore in order to maintain vigour, he collected nutmeg buds of different local unknown varieties from the Angamaly forest area. In 2003, he noticed the peculiarity of one plant with fruits in bunches, a higher number of fruits per tree and intense aroma in mace. Later he

propagated it through budding & grafting and replaced the old plantation. In budding, he got good results and homogeneity of the desired characters. Now he owns 175 fifteen – seventeen years old trees of the variety at his farm. The trees bear fruits in bunches of three per stalk with higher yield (in a 17-years old plant, dry nut 35kg, dry mace 10kg). The high-quality mace contains superior essential oil per cent (24-25%) and medicinal properties.

NIF-India facilitated the biochemical and quality analysis of the variety at the Indian Institute of Spices Research, Kozhikode, Kerala. The variety was found to be superior in terms of higher mace oil content (24.3%), non-volatile extract (33.1%), Beta-pinene (12.69%) and myristicin (25.95%) as compared to the check varieties. The variety is being cultivated in 2.5 acres in Idukki district where over 350 grafted plants have been transplanted.

