

Floriculture – a Gainful Livelihood Option

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A progressive farmer from Radang in East Sikkim, Bishnu Kumar Rai has embraced floriculture as a livelihood option since 2008. He cultivates roses in a 650 sq feet land and a green house provided by the State horticulture department.

Rai was first introduced to floriculture by his wife who attended a week long training programme supported by the State horticulture department on General Green House Management at the Horticulture training centre, TalegaonDabhade in Pune. Later, he acquired further knowledge on floriculture by attending a training programme organized by the department and started reaping the dividends. He has constructed a 80 X 18 feet green house with his own contribution and help from State horticulture department.

So far, this year, Rai has sold roses worth Rs. 1 lakh 60 thousands and is hoping to cross Rs. 1 lakh 70 thousand in sales by the end of this year from the 5000 planted saplings. The selling price of rose per stick is Rs. 3 during off-season and Rs. 5 in peak season. Having taken up floriculture three years ago, this horticulturist has made Rs. 96,000 in the first year and Rs. 1.45 lakhs in the second year through sales. He follows the drip irrigation technology which saves water and fertilizer by allowing water to drip slowly to the roots of the plants, either on the soil surface or directly into the root zone through a network of valves, pipes, tubes and emitters.

After gaining experience in rose cultivation, Rai has branched off to cultivate Jarvera from April 2011 and has already earned more than Rs. 30,000 by selling cut flowers. He is selling 100 sticks every day at the rate of Rs 4 per piece. It is easy to cultivate Jarvera as compared to rose as risk of disease is very less in it and Jarvera blossoms 12 months a year, he said. He is expecting to earn Rs. 50,000 to Rs. 60,000 from 800 plants this year and receives whole hearted support from his wife in this profession.

This energetic farmer has a future plan to develop his area as a floriculture belt and remains committed to cultivate flowers suitable in his 1 acre land. He has not limited himself to flowers but has been cultivating vegetables for almost two decades. He grows cabbages, cauliflower, broccoli, carrot, tomato and other green vegetables.

Rai had won the 2nd prize of Rs. 15,000 along with a certificate during the Horticulture Show 2011 held at Saramsa. He had also bagged a cash 3rd prize of Rs. 5,000 in vegetable (tomato) category during the Kharif Kisan Mela 2008 held at Saramsa.

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