

22-23 DECEMBER 2020
ADUKKAM, TAMIL NADU

TRAINING ON WILD FOODS AND NURSERY TECHNIQUES

NTFP EXCHANGE PROGRAMME
NETWORKING FORUM INDIA



Solanum surattense,
the berries of which
are cooked and eaten.

The Importance of Wild Foods

The identification and consumption of wild foods has declined vastly among most populations, including the Adivasi populations that have knowledge about these foods. Their dependence on the market for most food stuff, including the foods supplied by the PDS system, has left them vulnerable as well as unhealthy as most of these food are processed and/or refined, and with very narrow choices.

This training intended to revive the knowledge still latent among the people, increase the range of foods that are recognized as edible, discuss the reasons in their communities that lead to the decline in the consumption of such foods, and find ways to revive such traditions.

Introduction

The essential purpose of the training was that of improving the basic and general understanding about wild foods and nursery techniques. These sessions were conducted in the Adukkam Resource Centre.



"When we talk about traditional knowledge, it is something we need to keep in mind that we need to create opportunities where knowledge can be passed on."

-Madhu Ramnath



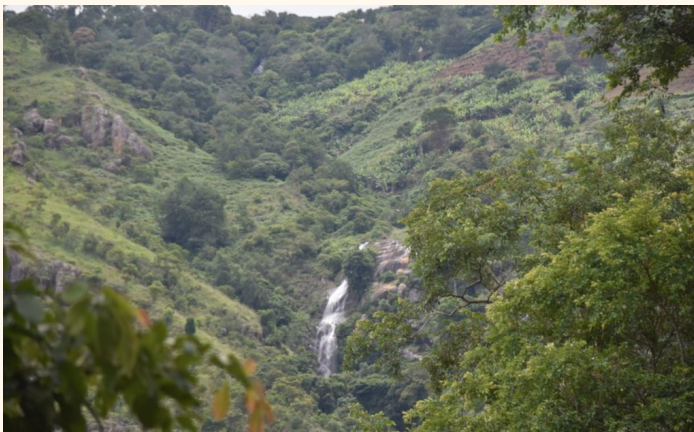
The participants involved Adivasi and rural people from the regions of Adukkam, Tamaraikulam, Panjamthangi odai, Genguvarpatti while some student-researchers were from the Kanyakumari district. The resource teachers for the training were Ms. Mariamma, Ms. Selviswari, Madhu Ramnath and R. Jeyaram from Kudhraiya and Genguvarpatti.

(Insert text on Adukkam Resource Center)

Day 1 Activities (December 22, 2020)



The first day began with a round of introductions of the 22 participants which included their work as well as their interest and knowledge about wild foods. Madhu then started with the history of agriculture and pre-agricultural societies,



Day 1 Activities (December 22, 2020)



(i) The entire group was divided into 4 teams and sent off in different directions into the forest nearby for about an hour. The goal was to have each team identify edible plants and plant parts and return with specimens of their finds to the larger meeting that was to converge at the stone circle, the site of the discussions; each team had a member who was familiar with the terrain.



(ii) On their return, each team identified and described the plants they had brought back, also explaining how these plants and plant parts were to be processed and cooked. There were a total of 39 food plants and 9 medicinal plants, some of them overlapping. Each of these plants were described in detail and the resource persons who knew the plants explained their qualities, the way these foods were cooked, etc., for the benefit of those who had had no previous experience with these species.



Day 1 Activities (December 22, 2020)



(iii) Once the plants had been described and documented a longer discussion was held, with all the participants, about various aspects of wild foods. This included their availability in the areas of the participants, the knowledge about them, reasons for the decline in their inclusion in diets in present day society, and scope for their revival. It was also obvious that the Adivasi participants had more knowledge and continuity with these foods that the non-Adivasis in our group.



"There was an obvious admiration for the Adivasi people by the plains people; to have kept such knowledge alive, and the willingness to share it with everyone."

-Madhu Ramnath

Day 2 Activities (December 23, 2020)



The second day was devoted to nursery techniques, beginning with seed collection and their storage to the various stages of transplanting, and finally to the planting of the sapling in the chosen spot. This session was conducted on the second day in the Arboretum of the Palni Hills Conservation Council in Gengyvarpatti.



The second day began with a long (5 km) slow walk down the hillside to observe various ecological features such as niches, certain basic plant characteristics, and the spread of wild foods along the way. The teams managed to collect several edible greens as well as tubers,



Day 2 Activities (December 23, 2020)



(i) At the Genuvarpatti centre of the PHCC, which is an arboretum and nursery, Jeyaram (resource person and manager of the centre) conducted a session around nursery techniques which included all the steps between seed collection and final planting. This was followed by an elaborate question-answer session that lasted more than 2 hours.



Jeyaram explaining nursery techniques in the Genuvarpatti Centre.



(ii) After the lecture a visit to the nursery was made (this included a wild food section) to practically the various steps that had been explained earlier. This was led by both Jeyaram and Selviswari.

Day 2 Activities (December 23, 2020)



Simultaneously Mariamma (resource person) showed how the foods gathered on the way could be cooked and some of the participants watched that through.



(left) Cooking food collected for their meal.

(iii) Several participants selected plants that they wanted for their homes and institutions or communities, and this was duly arranged. Questions followed about the qualities of various species, the germination of seeds and other details important for plant raising.

The second day and the entire training ended with a round of thanks and the offer of token gifts (honey and beeswax candles).



(above) Velamma explaining the medicinal properties of a plant.



Participants List



SL. No	Name of the Participants	Institution
1	P. Muthusamy	SEEDS Trust
2	S. Vincent Sahaya Paulraj	SEEDS Trust
3	P. Dhanalakshmi	SEEDS Trust
4	T. Priya	SEEDS Trust
5	A. Veeramani	SEEDS Trust
6	V. Cinnaiah	SEEDS Trust
7	M. Ponnumani	SEEDS Trust
8	T. Jeeva	SEEDS Trust
9	S. Satheeskumar	Gandhigram Rural University
10	A. Arunpandi	SEEDS Trust
11	M. Akilavan	SEEDS Trust
12	M Sheriff	PHCC
13	Sumathi	Adukkam Resource Centre
14	Ranga Nayaki	Adukkam Resource Centre
15	Saravana Devi	Adukkam Resource Centre
16	Lorudhu Mery	Thamarai Kulam
17	Murugayee	Thamarai Kulam
18	Selviswari	PHCC
18	Mariamamma	PHCC
20	Nagamma	Kudhraiyyar
21	Velamma	Kudhraiyyar
22	P Ashish Kumar	Adukkam Resource Centre



Forest Foods Field School Project

A recent ongoing campaign was launched on Global Giving that supports Adivasi youth training on wild foods from women experts at the Forest Food Field School in Adukkam, India.

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Adivasi Women Train Youth on Forest Foods in India

by NTFP-EP Asia



\$1,783 raised of \$10,000 goal

32 donations **\$8,217** to go

[DONATE NOW](#)

Donate once

Donate monthly

\$15 USD	will provide 1 teaching kit per scholar to take home after the training	➤
\$50 USD	will provide 1 day of board and lodging for 1 scholar	➤
\$100 USD	will cover 1 day training cost for 1 scholar, including board and lodging	➤
\$500 USD	covers the 1 week training course of 1 scholar, including board and lodging	➤

[Global Giving Page Link](#)

The Forest Food Field School addresses the knowledge gap of youth and locals on wild foods through capacity building on relevant techniques on wild foods documentation, management, and preparation. The forest food gardens will function as demonstration plots at the local level and as a place for collection of newer, lesser-known edible plants. The youth will look at their landscape with a more appreciative view.



Link to short video:
youtu.be/dLLMUzxBu4k

Forest Food Field School in Addukam - Resource Centre and Wild Food Gardens