

BANANA FLOWER PICKLE (*THOKKU*) AND STEM PICKLE

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Preamble

The banana male bud and central core stem are materials produced in banana crop production with less economic value. It is converted into a high value added products by making flower (*thokku*) and stem pickles. The process of flower pickle involves removal of pistil, blanching, grinding and addition of spices and oil while the steps of preparing central core stem pickle comprises extraction of stem from pseudostem, slicing and cutting into small pieces, removal of fiber, blanching, and addition of spices and oil for central core stem pickle making. The products are tasty and stable for a year at room temperature. The technology can be adoptable to banana growing regions of the country. The product is suitable for all the age groups.

Adoptable to Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise levels, the training and transfer of technology for the product is available at ICAR – National Research Centre for Banana, Thogamalai Road, Thayanur Post, Tiruchirappalli – 620 102, Tamil Nadu. The product is highly suitable Self-Help Group for women (SHGs). Being delicious and tasty, the product is suitable for consumption to all age groups.

Advantages

- Rich in dietary fibre (6g in100g).
- Creation of wealth from waste (cheaply available waste male bud is used as raw materials).
- High cost benefit ratio (1:2.1).
- Flower *thokku* can be ideal choice with *idly*, *dosa*, *chappatti* and even with rice items.
- Employment generation to rural enterprise, particularly for womenfolk.



Banana flower pickle (thokku)



Banana central core stem pickle

Impact of banana based flower and stem pickles

NRCB has commercialized the technology to 16 entrepreneurs till date. There is an overwhelming response for the banana flower pickle in the domestic market. Domestic and export markets are showing keen interest in this technology as well.

Mr. N. Karthikumar from Mohanur, Namakkal District, Tamil Nadu received training from ICAR - NRCB and he operates the business of both banana flower and stem pickles under the brand name of 'KRL Foods' in all the districts of Tamil Nadu and some parts of Karnataka, Kerala, Gujarat and Maharashtra (Mumbai) states too by employing more than 50 distributors and a few SHGs/NGOs. Also exporting the products to Malaysia & Australia through sub-buyers. Both the products have been spread to all the districts of Tamil Nadu and to neighboring and far away states like Karnataka, Kerala, Gujarat and Maharashtra through the company makes a turnover of 20 million per year. Recognizing his contribution to the society and for the food industry, he was awarded with 'Young Entrepreneur Award' from NRC Banana, Tiruchirappalli on August 21st 2011 and Agrinnovate India Pvt. Ltd, award from New Delhi in 2013.



Mr. Karthikumar receiving 'Young Entrepreneur Award'



A commercialized banana flower *thokku*

Gramalaya, an NGO in Tiruchirappalli District, Tamil Nadu, is working on production of value added products from banana. The technologies of pickle and fig preparation and also fibre extraction from banana pseudostem and handicrafts making were transferred to the NGO, which in turn trained more than 3000 women SHG members in banana products *viz.* banana flower pickle, stem pickle, banana fruit juice/RTS, banana fig and handicrafts. This has helped to generate an income of about 5.00 lakh in the first year. The Gramalaya was awarded 'Best Entrepreneur Award' in 2015 by the Centre.



Signing of Transfer of Technology Agreement with NGO, Gramalaya



The product of banana flower pickle by Gramalaya



An official of Gramalaya receiving 'Best Entrepreneur Award' in the presence of then DG, Dr. S. Ayyappan



A certificate of appreciation to the ICAR-NRCB by the Gramalaya

Mrs. G. Viruthambal, (Cuddalore District, Tamil Nadu) a home maker turned into successful Agri-Entrepreneur after undertaking training during July 2016 at ICAR-NRC for Banana, Trichy, TN on 'Production of banana based pickles - Flower & Stem Pickle' under

Technical Know-How. She produces and sells two products under the brand name of ‘GVR Pickles’ in and around Cuddalore as well in the adjacent districts. Using the technology, she earns a monthly income to a tune of Rs. 2.2 to 2.6 lakhs. Recognizing the contribution of the company to the society and Food Processing sector, ICAR –NRCB honored the company with ‘Best Women Entrepreneur Award’ in 2017 to her.



Mrs. Viruthambal with products of banana flower and stem pickles



Mrs. Viruthambal receiving ‘Best Women Entrepreneur Award’ in 2017 from a foreign dignitary on visit to ICAR-NRCB