



## Bush pepper – A profitable venture by an innovative farmer

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It may sound impossible to reap huge income from a small scale agri-enterprise. But the case is true for Mr. Jojo, an enterprising youth who runs a horticultural nursery. He has mastered the art of bush pepper making and became successful in its marketing. Bush pepper is a miniature pepper plant rooted from lateral branches of a pepper vine. Literally the bushy growth habit adapted for cultivation in pots and fullness of spikes all around gives the plant an ornamental attire for onlookers. Nowadays bush pepper peeps up every home. It has become a sought after ornamental spice meeting the culinary need and aesthetic sense of most of the urban and semi-urban people. It has the charm of producing green berries throughout the year with less care and hassle free harvesting by virtue of possessing the ability to grow without support. This makes every roof top, veranda, sit out and court yard accessible to the plant.

Mr. Jojo was impressed by the demand for bush pepper plants and the premium price offered by the customers for few of his yielding potted plants displayed in the nursery. The usual method of bush pepper making is by using three noded cuttings of lateral branches and induction of rooting using hormone at controlled conditions. The success in this method was very low fluctuating from 10 to 40 per cent only. The saying 'practice makes a man perfect' is true regarding the propagation skills of Jojo. He has perfected many propagation techniques in fruit plants like rambutan and spices like nutmeg.

Jojo with a penchant for care of plants has learned the scientific principles of plant propagation from Krishi Vigyan Kendra of Indian Institute of Spices Research, Kozhikode. He was the young farmer award winner of Kerala government and National award winner among youth from Indian Agricultural Research Institute, New Delhi for his outstanding horticultural nursery and integrated farming activities. Usually the side shoots of pepper plants in pots are not taken for bush pepper production, for the fear of reduced growth. Jojo started his trials on the plants in pots and arrived at a new production technique of bush pepper that can produce bush pepper in tandem from yielding plants in pots.

The new technique of Jojo is simple and results in quick production of bush pepper without affecting the parent plant in the pot. The method simply induces rooting below the nodes of a branch by keeping the node in close contact with soil-FYM mixture taken in a polybag, kept on the surface of potted mother plant with sufficient branches and spikes. The branch is held in good contact with soil by using an inverted 'V' shaped support of fresh coconut midrib. Watering is done twice daily. After about 40 days, the roots emerge from the nodes. The new bush pepper plants in the polybag can be removed from mother plants after three weeks and can be marketed at attractive prices.

He has identified a superior clone of the most popular cultivar, Karimunda from his garden. The cultivar has high spiking intensity with frequent bearing of two spikes per node of the lateral. The

speciality of the clone and its performance are the reasons for queuing up of public in his nursery for bush pepper. He has also succeeded in layering of bush pepper too like many other horticultural crops. He has developed methods to revitalize bush pepper and speed up the vigour and growth by pruning off of the spikes to control spiking behaviour. For a three year old bush pepper plant with full spikes, the price offered is up to Rs.500 making bush pepper the most promising product in the local market.

Nowadays bush pepper is a sought after gift for house warming, beautifying the landscapes and fulfilling herbal and culinary needs of the homes. Indeed it is true that from a good yielding pepper vine of six years, production of more than twenty five bush pepper plants is quite possible. Hence thousands of rupees can be earned through bush pepper from a single vine if planned properly.

(The farmer can be contacted in the following address: Jojo Jacob, Randuplackal House, Avadukka P.O., Kozhikode-673528, Kerala, Phone - 09446668879)



Bush pepper in the Home yard of Jojo



Innovative technique for multiplying bush pepper



Multi-spiked variety



Multi-spiked branches of elite selection