

## Titanium gives a good veggie yield

### **Agriculture dept. helps cultivate two-acre sandy land dumped with waste**

Thiruvananthapuram: This Onam, Travancore Titanium Products Ltd. (TTPL) has had a good harvest of organic vegetables and plantain leaves. The initiative was part of the Onathinorumuram Pachakkari and Oru Vaazhayila projects of the Agriculture Department. Vegetable cultivation on two acres of unused company land, however, posed many challenges. TTPL has coastal saline and sandy soil, devoid of organic matter and dumped with waste, including sludge that remains after extraction of titanium dioxide. This made



cultivation there impossible. The Kudappanakkunnu Krishi Bhavan, which was supporting the initiative, adopted a scientific approach to the problem and conducted a soil analysis to find out its nutrient status, pH, salinity and so on. Soil enrichment then was taken up using aerobic bin and kitchen bin compost from the city Corporation. Dung from native varieties of cows was used to improve the beneficial microbial population in the soil. Seeds of vegetable crops such as yard long beans, green and purple brinjal, tomatoes, ladies' finger, bitter gourd, snake gourd, golden cucumber, chilli, and amaranthus were then planted, with 250 plantains of varieties such as nendran, palayankodan and rasakadali, papaya, and curry leaves plants as border. No chemical fertilizers or pesticides were used.

### **Marigold planted**

As part of biological engineering measures, marigold was planted in between the vegetable crops to repel harmful pests and attract beneficial such as natural predators and pollinators.

Finally, the land that was lying barren started yielding produce in plenty. Minister for Agriculture V.S. Sunilkumar inaugurated the harvesting of produce here. The cultivation is one of the best examples of convergence, said Krishi Bhavan agricultural officer Joseph T.M. Elaborating, he said, a public sector industrial institution came forward to take up vegetable cultivation; the Agriculture Department's Krishi Bhavan provided technical and financial support; and the city Corporation supplied biocompost. An eco-fencing of 3,000 fruit-bearing

trees was done recently on the TTPL land that comes to nearly 80 acres. These include jackfruit, rambutan, guava, rose apple, and 'agasthya cheera'.

Source: [The Hindu](#), September, 07, 2019 (verbatim reproduced)