

Isha Agro Forestry promotes organic and tree crop cultivation

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

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IN order to spread awareness on organic farming and tree crop cultivation, Isha Agro Forestry is organising a one-day practical training session and seminar here on Sunday (October 14).

It will be held at the farm owned by Dr Duraisamy at Kancheri Malaipudur near Tammampatti where he has planted one lakh trees on 120 acres. Speaking to media persons, Isha Agro Forestry co-ordinator Tamil Maran said the Isha Agro movement was started in 2005 with an objective to increase the green cover in the state to 33 per cent and it has been distributing saplings through its 50 nurseries.

From 2010, it has been guiding and assisting farmers on growing trees on their lands for which the response is good, he said, adding many of them wish to switch over to tree crop cultivation but lack knowledge.

"We test the soil quality and give suggestions on suitable trees that would grow well on the land and fetch them good profit. In the past eight years, we planted more than 10 lakh tree saplings on 6000 acres of farmlands owned by over 750

farmers. We charge Rs 7 per sapling. For the first two years, our team inspects the land regularly and gives them advice on organic farming, maintenance and kits free of cost," Maran said.

The organisation, he claimed, has proved that pepper can be cultivated in normal lands in Pudukottai district. In In the seminar to be conducted on Sunday, 15 farmers, who have earned huge profits in tree crop cultivation and organic farming, will share their success stories.

Dr Duraisamy said he has been into tree crop cultivation since 2000 and later, using the services of Isha, grew one lakh trees of different species on his 120 acres. "This is a one-time investment. If we save the tree for first two years, it will automatically start growing healthy with little amount of water. I am earning more than what I can earn in 20 years of my medical profession through tree crop cultivation. Likewise, farmers can also earn 10 times of what they are earning from normal crops in 20 years," he claimed.

Organic farmers Valluvan, Dr Devanathan and another Isha co-ordinator swami Srimukha were present.