



UPDATES

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MEENANGADI BUILDS SOIL WISDOM FOR A NET-ZERO FUTURE

MANNORUKKAM IN ACTION



2025



Meenangadi Builds Soil Wisdom For A Net-Zero Future

WAYANAD: In August, Meenangadi's journey toward carbon neutrality deepened its roots in the soil. With Mannorukkam at the centre, farmers, scientists, and communities came together to build knowledge, test the land, and prepare the ground for more resilient farming.

Events: Soil To Soul Trainings



On 13 August, twenty-one master farmers gathered at Meenangadi Community Hall for training under the Mannorukkam project. Led by Sri. Ravi Mavilan, Senior Chemist at the High-Tech Soil Analytical Lab, Kalpetta, the session explored soil's physical, chemical, and biological properties. Farmers learned about macro and micronutrients, deficiency symptoms, and how soil testing helps manage fertility. Practical demonstrations on sample

collection and available testing facilities in Wayanad gave them tools they could carry back to their own fields.

Later, on 28 August, another training brought together seventeen master farmers at the Panchayat Hall. Inaugurated by Sri. K.E. Vinayan, President of Meenangadi Grama Panchayat, the session was led by Sri. K. Mammooty, Retd. Deputy Director of Agriculture. He introduced scientific soil sampling, organic manure preparation, the role of biofertilizers, and mulching practices using Gliricidia and VAM. Soil health cards and farmer diaries were distributed, and discussions opened up on rising input costs, groundwater depletion, and excessive chemical use. For many farmers, the training offered not just technical knowledge but a renewed sense of confidence in sustainable practices.

Field Visits Bring Science To Soil Health



Field visits were carried out to collect soil samples from selected master farmers across Meenangadi. A total of 15 samples were tested this month, starting with basic parameters like pH, electrical conductivity, and organic carbon,

followed by micronutrients such as potassium, zinc, iron, copper, magnesium, boron, sulphur, and manganese.

The process combined field tools like the Pusa Meter with laboratory analysis, and results were recorded in a digital database for comparison. This scientific approach not only provides clarity on the nutrient status of each farm but also helps Thanal plan targeted interventions for improving soil health.

Building Farmer Profiles: 25 Master Farmers And 324 Women Farmers Documented

Data collection was completed for 25 master farmers selected under the Mannorukkam project. Detailed information about their cropping patterns, input use, and agricultural practices is now documented as a baseline to measure the project's long-term impact.

Beyond master farmers, the effort extended to 324 women farmers, ensuring inclusivity and building a broader picture of farming practices in Meenangadi. This growing database is key for tailoring interventions, sharing knowledge, and measuring improvements in productivity and resilience over time.

Success Story: Rajashekaran Kaani's Leap into Farming



At 60, Rajashekaran Kaani of Kuzhaviyodu hamlet is proving that it's never too late to grow new dreams.

Once dependent only on MGNREGA wages, he now manages goats, vegetables, and a shared SHG farm with water access secured through the ITDP project. His goats have multiplied – from three to seven, with the baby goats alone valued at more than 50,000.

His SHG pooled their nutrigarden kits and cultivated vegetables together, earning 4,000 in the first sale, with more expected during Onam. Their compost unit has also reached a turnover of nearly 1 lakh, of which Rajashekaran received a share.

From a farmer with limited means, he now stands as an example of how livelihood support, training, and collective effort can transform lives.

Keeping Rhythm, Keeping Livelihoods Cholanavayal Shinkarimelam



In Cholanavayal, drums do more than echo across the hills – they sustain families. The Shinkarimelam team supported under NABARD's TDF project has already earned over 1 lakh this year through performances across Kerala and Tamil Nadu.

Their journey shows how traditional art forms can thrive as living practices, providing both cultural pride and sustainable incomes.

Vimala's Journey: from Daily Wages to Entrepreneurship

Vimala once depended on daily wage labour for survival. Today, with support from the TDF project, she runs goat farming, poultry, and a petty shop. Weekly income from egg sales has given her steady cash flow, confidence to invest, and the freedom to plan for the future.

Her story is a reminder that livelihood programmes do more than supplement incomes – they build resilience and dignity.

PROJECT UPDATES Loyola School's Butterfly Garden



Earlier this year, Thanal, with support from KIMS Health Cancer Centre (CSR) helped Loyola School, Sreekariyam, transform a small patch of campus into a butterfly garden.

Now, months later, Loyola students shared videos of butterflies crowding the garden and the laughter of children watching them. This is climate resilience in its simplest form: small, replicable actions that ripple outward, teaching children to value pollinators and ecosystems.

On The Farm at Kovalam

In Kovalam, Thanal's demo farm is slowly turning into a living classroom for organic farming. Supported by S M Vijayanand IAS (Retd.), the land now showcases multiple sustainable practices.

Coconut palms grow alongside legumes like cowpea and daincha, fixing nitrogen and enriching the soil. Sweet potato creeps along as living mulch, reducing weeds and protecting the soil. Marigolds brighten one



patch, while red spinach, brinjal, and tomatoes thrive together as mixed crops.

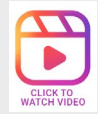
Bananas and lesser yam grow alongside red gram plants, which double up as both nitrogen fixers and natural windbreaks. On our visit, the team harvested tomatoes, enriched marigold beds with VAM bio-fertilizer, mulched with dry leaves, and brewed cow dung solutions to improve soil health.

It was a reminder that farms can be places of both hard work and joy. Sometimes, all it takes is a walk through such a space to rediscover why farming remains the most rooted form of climate resilience.

By the end of August, the farm's marigolds were ready for harvest. Nearly 3 kilograms were sold during the Onam season, a small but proud step that showed how even a demo farm can support both learning and livelihood.

CULTURE & KNOWLEDGE SPOTLIGHT

Meet the Panam Keni



The Panam Keni is a traditional water storage system built by the Kuruma tribe in Wayanad. Constructed with toddy palm stems and immersed in groundwater springs, it once served as the village's main drinking water source.

Even today, it supports families during summer, standing as living proof of how indigenous knowledge and sustainable design endure.

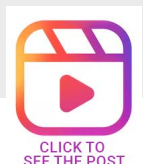
Why Bees Matter

World Honeybee Day passed quietly – a reminder of how easy it is to overlook what's fading.

India has about 12.26 lakh bee colonies, but some regions face up to 80% decline. Globally, beekeepers lose an average of 30% of colonies every year, with native bees disappearing even faster.

Missing World Honeybee Day doesn't mean it's too late to act. Plant native flowers, support pollinator-friendly farming, and create safe spaces for village and wild bees.

Let's work toward a future where bees thrive, and "Martyr" – a haunting artwork of a fallen bee – remains a metaphor, not a prophecy.



Onam at Thanal

On 28 August, the Thanal family gathered at the Organic Bazaar in Thiruvananthapuram to celebrate Onam together. Teams from different projects came to the main office, turning the day into a festival of colours, laughter, and community.

The celebrations began with music and dance, followed by traditional games like sundharik pottu thodal and musical chairs that had everyone cheering and laughing. A delicious

Onam sadhya was shared for lunch, bringing the entire team around the same table.

The day ended on a playful note with an "organic cricket match," featuring a wooden bat and stump, reminding us that even fun can carry the spirit of sustainability.

Onam at Thanal was more than a celebration. It was a day of togetherness and joy, a moment to pause, connect, and celebrate the bonds that keep us moving forward.



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