

CISH move to help curb malnutrition in school kids

Aiming to curb malnutrition among school children, the Central Institute for Subtropical Horticulture (CISH) will help the education department develop vegetable and fruit gardens in schools to improve the nutritive value of their mid day meal and make children aware about the role of seasonal vegetables in maintaining health.

“The nutritive value and various aspects which are the component of nutritional security will also be introduced to school children,” said Shailendra Rajan, director CISH, in a press statement on Sunday.

The institute will work out various models as per the requirement of the schools, keeping the productivity of the crop, efforts required for cultivation and nutritive value. State mid day meal authority had approached the ICAR-CISH for a collaborative programme which could make the scheme successful, he said.

The institute will organise a workshop which will be attended by school staff, students and cooks so that ground level realities are assessed for the successful planning of various models. These efforts are being made by the institute to make horticulture technologies available at school level and guide the institutions for collective vegetable and fruit growing on the land available with them. The impact may be on lakhs of children.

“If vegetable and fruit gardening is practised in a systematic manner, the concept of kitchen garden in schools will definitely help many malnourished students . Successful implementation will also help extend the idea at the family level and enabling education of parents through children,” Rajan said.

The institute is making two models, one for schools having sufficient land with them and another for the roof top of the schools. CISH will also educate schools to use the organic waste produced during mid day meal preparation for making valuable manure required for growing vegetables and other fruit plants. The institute will introduce various fruit plants which can take care of Vitamin C requirement.

Plants which can be accommodated in small space will be preferred and this will promote the usefulness of fruit trees in backyard or kitchen garden.