

More Than 36K Seed Packs Distributed



Head Teacher of Bureta Primary School, Ovalau island Mr. Nilesch Prasad at his home garden.

The Ministry of Agriculture through the COVID-19 Home Gardening initiative distributed 36,495 seed packs to 14 urban and peri-urban communities in Fiji.

While delivering his Ministerial statement in Parliament this week, Minister for Agriculture, Waterways, and Environment Hon. Dr. Mahendra Reddy said this was the first time the Ministry of Agriculture supported such an unprecedented level of activity aimed at the household level to grow their food.

“We are now seeing Fijians proudly showing off the fruits of their labour through the assistance provided by the

Ministry, and this is something that we should all be proud of,” said Dr. Reddy.

In less than two months since launching the Home Gardening package, the Ministry has distributed 16,391 packages to the Central Division, 13,137 in the Western Division, 983 in the Eastern Division, and 2,142 packages in the Northern Division.

“Furthermore, a total of 3,842 packages were distributed to faith-based organisations, and employees of non-government organisations and corporate entities aimed at people who were directly impacted by the effects of COVID-19, as a result of reduced

hours of work, loss of income or loss of employment.”

“This represents a total of 307,176 individual seed packets that were distributed to households around Fiji, completely free of charge. It is a legacy achievement in promoting food and nutrition security for our fellow Fijians,” said Minister Reddy.

He said the Ministry needed to significantly upscale its programmes to ensure food security for all Fijians, as this was one of the single biggest threat to our fellow Fijians in the wake of the disasters that gripped our nation.

“Home gardens are a time-tested local strategy that is widely adopted and practiced in various circumstances by local communities with limited resources and institutional support. Yet it is one that significantly provides for household food requirements through the involvement of household members in agriculture.”

The recipients that benefitted from the programme have produced homegrown vegetables for their own consumption which shows how all households are now returning to their roots and starting their home gardens.

Apart from providing for food and nutrition security, there is also an increasing awareness among researchers and health practitioners of the health benefits derived from home gardening activities.

The Ministry of Agriculture also advises the public that the COVID-19 Home Gardening Initiative has been

temporarily suspended in light of the reach achieved in such a short time, and to concentrate on the farm support programme, a parallel initiative under the Agriculture COVID-19 Response package.

“The Ministry is also reaching out to those living in rural and outer island communities through the community package activity with our Extension Services program. With that, targeted rural communities and women’s groups will be assisted through the provision of vegetable seeds, seedlings, fruit trees and agro-input.”

“There is renewed attention to food production and livelihood enhancement through home gardens across the world in the wake of COVID-19. I can proudly say that Fiji is indeed on the forefront of this initiative, which will go a long way in mitigating against the impact of the crisis that surrounds us today,” said Dr. Reddy.

Home gardening is one of the five (5) initiatives introduced by the Ministry to further improve Agriculture Development and output of the Sector. It supports the strategic priority of the Ministry in “Improving food and nutrition security for all Fijians”. It is in line with the Fijian Government’s National Development Plan, and globally, it has linkages to four (4) Sustainable Development Goals which are:

SDG 1 – No Poverty;

SDG 2 – Zero Hunger;

SDG 3 – Good Health and Well-

Being; and

SDG 4 – Responsible Consumption and Production.

The objective of the program is to assist households in urban and peri-urban areas with the provision of vegetable seeds, seedlings, and organic fertilizer. It ensures food and nutritious security for all livelihoods in Fiji. It also supports the involvement of women in agriculture as well as the use of kitchen waste as manure.

The Home Gardening Program was launched in Tavua by His Excellency the President Major-General (Ret’d) Jioji Konrote in April 2019 and was piloted in Tavua, Ba, and Lautoka benefiting sixty-two (62) recipients and their households, 66% of which were women.

The gardens were closely monitored by the Locality Field Officers from the planting to harvesting stages, with all the produce consumed by the households.

After witnessing the success of the program, this year, the Ministry aimed to further expand the programme to other divisions targeting to assist 2,000 farmers and communities in 2020.

However, due to the impact of COVID-19 and the impending natural disasters, the more devastating one being Tropical Cyclone Harold, which made landfall in Fiji as a Category 4 Cyclone on the night of 07-08 April, the initiative was extended to the affected communities.

Growing Cucumber for Cash



Cucumber
(*Cucumis sativas*)



Recommended Varieties:

- Greengo
- Cascade
- Bountiful No. 2
- Lissome swallow
- Merry swallow
- Zingpangu (Lebanese cucumber)
- Genuine

Seed Rate
2kg/ha

Planting Time:
All year around, fruits best during cool season.

Planting Methods:
Seeds are sown directly into well cultivated soil.

Spacing	Fertilizer/Manure	Weed Control/Management	Disease Control/Management	Insect Control/Management	Harvest/Yield/Food Value	Disaster Risk and Climate Change tips
Between rows: 1m Plants within rows: 30cm (trellising) - 50cm (ground creeping) Germination: 5 to 7 days after sowing.	Soil analysis should be done before planting Poultry manure: 5 tonnes/ha Mix well in the soil before planting NPK: 13:13:21 Apply 200kg/ha basal application at planting. Urea: 100kg/ha. Apply 50% at 4 weeks & 50% at 8 weeks after planting.	Hand weed or hoe as necessary. Weed Control: Weeds are hoed out when the plants are still standing. Inter row cultivation using horse drawn scarifiers can be used for clearing weeds in the rows and also for hilling the plants. Practice staking for quality fruits.	Anthracnose: Use healthy seeds Apply Benomyl at 15g/15L of water (Sold as Benlate). Spray at early flowering stage. Use Kocide at 15-20g/15L of water. Spray weekly, before and after harvest Or Manzate 30g/15L of water. Spray every 2 weeks. Gummy Stem Blight, Powdery Mildew: Manzate 30g/15L of water. Spray every 2 weeks. Or Chorothalonil spray every 7-10 days	Aphids: Apply Dimethioate at 15ml/15L (Sold as Rogor) or Bifenthrin at 15 to 20ml/16L knap-sack.	Harvest at 50 - 60 days after planting, continue picking of fruits for 3 weeks. Yield: Fresh 12 tonnes - 15 tons per hectare Food Value: Vitamin C	Good food alternative after a disaster, as it grows very fast. Good source of income.