

# Jack of all fruits and king of Tumakuru

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*A single jackfruit tree will fetch ₹10 lakh for a farmer in Karnataka*

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Forty-year-old S.S. Paramesha of Chelur village in Karnataka's Tumakuru district is proud that his jackfruit tree "has made it big." Planted 35 years ago by his father S.K. Siddappa, it produces a unique variety of jackfruit, with deep, coppery red flakes that are not only tasty but also have high nutritive value. Now it turns out it also has a high market value.

"All of us knew that it was a unique variety as there was a great demand for the fruits from this tree from all our friends and relatives. But we always gave them away as gifts. We never sold a single one," recalls Paramesha. But now the



The unique jackfruit variety has coppery red flakes. ■

SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

farmer is set earn ₹10 lakh from this tree over the next one year.

Since Paramesha does not have the wherewithal to multiply this variety, the Indian Institute of Horticultural Research (IIHR) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with him under which its scientists

will multiply it through grafting. IIHR will not only sell these saplings under its banner but will also provide 75% of the proceeds to the farmer. It has also nominated Paramesha as "the custodian of genetic diversity" for this particular variety, and named it 'Siddu' after his father.

According to IIHR Director M.R. Dinesh, the institute has already received an order for 10,000 saplings, and the formal sales will commence in two months. Paramesha stands to earn over ₹10 lakh from the sales of these 10,000 saplings. According to Karunakaran, head of IIHR's Tumakuru-based Central Horticultural Experimental Station (CHES) and the

scientist who identified this unique tree, the biggest advantage of this variety is that it yields very small fruits with an average weight of 2.44 kg, as against the 10-20 kg of normal varieties. "The main problem with normal jackfruit varieties is that the fruit is difficult to carry owing to its weight. But it is easy to carry 'Siddu' as it is lighter," he says.

While the health benefits of 'Siddu' jackfruit are still being analysed, the biochemical analysis has revealed that it has high lycopin content of 2 mg per 100 gm of pulp, as against 0.2 mg in normal varieties. It is also rich in antioxidants, the scientist points out.