

Muskmelon cv. Arka Siri cultivation: A success story

Sh. Gangadhar Reddy of Bhoopuru Village of Pavagada Taluk, Tumakuru district is one of the farmers who have taken up cultivation of the recently developed open pollinated muskmelon cv. Arka Siri developed from ICAR-Indian Institute of Horticultural Research (ICAR-IIHR), Bengaluru.

This cultivar has high TSS (12-13%) and good shelf life (up to 5 days under ambient conditions), 75-80 days maturity; fruits are elongated globe shaped with brownish yellow rind colour, medium netting and musky aroma with firm, juicy, dark orange flesh.

Tracking through his past records, Sh. Gangadhar Reddy has always been a progressive farmer and an early adopter. Traditionally, a rainfed farmer, he has successfully started cultivating tomato, french bean, chilli, muskmelon, watermelon and other vegetable crops recently. Encouraged by the performance of muskmelon variety, Arka Siri at the demonstration fields of IIHR, he had procured quarter kg seeds for cultivating in one acre area.

His native taluk Pavagada is relatively dry region and is known for melon cultivation. Since long, he had been cultivating different varieties of muskmelon during the summer season. This year also he had cultivated muskmelon in 5 acres, Arka Siri in one acre and Kundan variety for the remaining 4 acres. Compared to Kundan variety, he observed good fruit set and size in Arka Siri variety. He obtained the first harvest after 65-72 days in Arka Siri. He was very happily expressing that peacock from neighboring region used to come to his plot and

prey on Arka Siri variety only and not Kundan variety owing to high TSS and aroma of Arka Siri. He had planted 8,000 seeds of Arka Siri and obtained a yield of 1.5 kg per plant, amounting to a total yield of 12 tonnes per acre. He sold it at an average price of ₹12.5/kg with a gross income of ₹1,50,000. His cost of cultivation was ₹50,000. Excluding the expenditure, Mr Gangadhar Reddy made a profit of ₹1,00,000 from one acre of Arka Siri in a duration of 80 days. He expressed the desire to continue the same

variety in the next season also, since it is an open pollinated variety, where farmer can save his own seed and reduce cost of cultivation. Traders who marketed his produce in Mumbai told that the variety is preferred in the market due to its traditional type features, fine netting, good keeping quality of around 5 days and importantly, transportability. Mr Gangadhar Reddy observed a general tolerance to several

diseases like powdery mildew, downy mildew in this variety. Overall the farmer is very satisfied with its field performance followed by market preference and good returns. Inspired by this new variety, the farmers in and around the surrounding villages have accepted the variety and are coming forward to take seeds from IIHR for large scale cultivation.

For further interaction, please write to:

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