

## Farmers urged to shift towards organic farming

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The compost yard at the Government Botanical Garden in Udthagamandalam. | Photo Credit: M. Sathyamoorthy

The Government Botanical Garden (GBG) in Udthagamandalam has taken a lead in inspiring farmers across the Nilgiris to adopt organic farming regarding compost for use on the thousands of flowering plants inside the garden.

Started recently, three cows have been purchased by the Horticulture Department in the Nilgiris. The dung from the cows is being used to produce compost and vermicompost, as well as 'panchagavya' and 'dasagavya'.

Assistant Director of Horticulture (Nilgiris district), M. Radhakrishnan, said that around three tonnes of compost are produced each year. "While most of it gets used within the garden itself for the thousands of flowering plants from across the world that are grown here, around two tonnes of compost and vermicompost are sold to farmers at a reduced price," he added.

The compost is sold at ₹10 per kg and more farmers are coming forward to purchase the compost directly from the department and are gradually moving away from using chemical fertilizers, officials said.

The use of chemical fertilizers inside the GBG has reduced substantially, Mr. Radhakrishnan said.

"The Nilgiris district administration's effort to promote organic farming is a step in the right direction to minimise the effect of the conventional type of farming on the environment. The Government Botanical Garden is doing its utmost to help bring awareness and to implement organic farming practices," he added.

Other parks and gardens in the Nilgiris, too, are following suit, with compost being produced at the Kattery Park in Coonoor. The compost produced there is being used not just at the Kattery Park but also in the Sims Park in Coonoor, officials said.

Source:<https://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/Coimbatore/farmers-urged-to-shift-towards-organic-farming/article37098660.ece>