

NITK gets patent for technology to produce ready-to-cook tubers

MANGALURU, DHNS: NITK, Surathkal, received a patent for a technology to produce irritation free, ready-to-cook vegetable from tuber crops such as elephant foot yam, taro (*Colocasia*), tannia and giant taro, collectively called as aroids.

Prof Prasanna Belur and the team from the Chemical Engineering department have developed the technology. By deploying this technology more than 90% of the oxalates, which cause biting taste and irritation, can be removed without affecting its taste, aroma and texture.

The vegetables produced can be preserved for a week in the refrigerator (at 4 degrees Celsius) and for three months if vacuum packing is adapted. Tuber crops such as elephant foot yam, taro (*colocasia*), tannia and giant taro contain very large amounts of oxalates (300-7500 mg per kg of corms on a dry weight basis). Ingestion of foods containing oxalates causes caustic effects and irritation to the intestinal tract and affects the bioavailability of minerals like calcium, magnesium, zinc and copper.

Adoption of this technology reduces post-harvest loss, boosts up demand from urban consumers, and thus can increase the income for elephant foot yam/taro farmers.

Now, NITK Surathkal, is planning to license the technology to entrepreneurs/organisations, who are interested in the production of ready-to-cook vegetables for domestic and export markets.