

Women in Kerala Exploring New Avenues in Coconut Plucking

Indian Institute of Spices Research (IISR), Kozhikode has recently initiated a step towards empowering women through training in coconut plucking. Now, coconut plucking will no longer be considered a male bastion. Their female counterpart will give them a knife-edge competition as first batch of 'Friends of Coconut'



completed their six day training at the Peruvannamuzhi Krishi Vigyan Kendra of the IISR recently. Institute recently conducted an 'all women' training programme on coconut climbing for a group of 20 women (20-35 years). The training was organised as part of the 'Friends of Coconut Tree' programme being implemented by the Coconut Development Board to train unemployed youth in the art of climbing coconut trees and caring for them. KVK, Peruvannamuzhi is the first to conduct a training programme exclusively for women as part of the Friends of Coconut Tree programme of the Board. The programme covered introduction to coconut palm, climate, soil requirements and varieties, sessions on climbing machine-main parts, working and trial, nutrient management, recycling of palm waste, intercropping and mixed cropping, etc. Besides, practical lessons on climbing coconut trees, sessions were also held on harvesting, tender and mature nut identification, Identification of pests and disease of coconut and their management, crown cleaning aspects, seed nut procurement, safe handling of seed nuts and tender nuts, coconut nursery and its management etc. Physical exercise towards the beginning of each day's training was another highlight of the programme. According to the trainees, coconut climbing is an easy task and they felt no physical exhaustion while using the machine. During the last session of the training, a 'Coconut Olympics' was also conducted in which the trainees were able to climb the palms within 48- 50 seconds, a feat equivalent to their male counterparts.