

**Hon'ble Governor of Tamil Nadu, Thiru. Banwarilal Purohit addressed at the valedictory function of the 123<sup>rd</sup> Flower Show at Ooty on 21.05.2019**

Thiru. Banwarilal Purohit, Hon'ble Governor of Tamil Nadu participated as chief guest at the valedictory function of the 123<sup>rd</sup> Flower Show, at Botanical Garden, Udthagamandalam today (21.05.2019) and addressed the gathering.

Hon'ble Governor said, It gives me great happiness to be here today at the Botanical Gardens for the valedictory function of the 123<sup>rd</sup> Flower Show. This unique flower show which is being organised from 1896 onwards enjoys international recognition for its antiquity and stature.

The show is a treat for the eye with hundreds of varieties of flowers in different hues decorating the landscape. Various kinds of tropical and temperate vegetables are also exhibited by the growers participating in the various competitions. Floral decorations, Indian and exotic flower arrangements, vegetable carvings flower rangoli, bonsai etc. form some of the major attractions for the visiting tourist. The cut flower stalls from the private and public gardens add beauty to the event.

Breathtaking floral displays, beautifully designed gardens innovative new designs and exotic exhibits are the high points of any flower show. All over the world, many types of flower shows are being conducted, wherein exotic and indigenous flowers are obtained from several sources and displayed. In this category one can recall the famous flower shows of the world such as the Chelsea Flower Show of England, the Portland Rose Festival of Oregon, the Singapore Garden Festival, the Philadelphia Flower Show, the Epcot International Flower and Garden Festival of Florida, The Hampton Court Palace Flower Show of England, the Hong Kong Flower Expo, the Melbourne International Flower and Garden Show of Australia, the San Francisco Flower and Garden Show and the Canada Blooms of Toronto. What makes the Ooty flower show unique and special is the high level of local public participation that is encouraged in the preparation of the flowering plants and their display.

This show ropes in Estate Gardens, Private Cottage Gardens, Public Gardens and the common public for obtaining the exhibits. Thousands of households are engaged in the preparation of potted flowers plants every year for this flower show competition. I am informed that there are a record number of 30,000 potted flower plants here on display.

The work starts in November every year when the competitors who are mainly residents of the Nilgiris start growing the plants in beds and in pots so that they bloom during the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of May.

Nilgiris thus represents the diamond that shines forth in the decorated gold crown of the state's horticulture activities.

As per statistics, Tamil Nadu is among the leading Horticultural States of India, contributing 5.88% towards National Horticulture Production. It accounts for nearly 6.5% of the country's production of fruits and for 19% of the flowers produced in India.

It is heartening to see that the increasing interest in horticulture among farmers is resulting in a 10% growth in the area under horticultural crops year after year.

The main strategies of the Horticulture department are to encourage the use of quality seeds and quality planting material for area expansion, promotion of high density planting. For this, quality planting materials are being produced in State Horticulture Farms and distributed to farmers at a subsidized cost to encourage flower cultivation with the main varieties being jasmine, chrysanthemum, rose and marigold. Canopy management, senile orchards rejuvenation, improved Post Harvest Management practices and strengthening of infrastructure facilities are some of the other technique employed by the department.

Water is a critical input for horticulture activities. Our state which focuses on conserving water resources is specially focussed on the promotion of micro irrigation in Horticulture crops.

The scheme is being implemented under the "Per Drop More Crop" component of the Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (PMKSY) with a subsidy sharing pattern of 60:40 between the Central and State. Tamil Nadu is the only state in the country extending 100% subsidy to Small and Marginal farmers and 75% subsidy to other category farmers.

The National Horticulture Mission which is focused on holistic development of Horticulture is another noteworthy scheme which aims to increase the production and productivity of crops by adopting innovative strategies.

The scheme is implemented in 22 districts of Tamil Nadu including the Nilgiris and has an annual outlay of about Rs.175 crores.

Under the National Horticulture Mission scheme a Centre of Excellence for cut flowers at Thally, Krishnagiri district has been established at a project cost of Rs.8.80 crore. Action is being taken to establish a Centre of Excellence for Hilly vegetables in Nanjanadu in the Nilgiris. I request farmers to fully utilise the benefits under the various schemes so as to increase production, reduce costs and thereby enhance their earnings.

Love for flowers is not a new fashion. Flowers have always enjoyed a special place in the hearts of the people of our state. Every temple and every bazaar has scores of flower vendors who make garlands and flower strings with fresh flowers all through the year.

The biggest flower garland is called Andal Malai and is named after Andal of Srivilliputtur who lived 1300 years ago and was a Vishnu devotee. This garland which is normally 8 ft long is made up of different flowers.

Sangam Tamil literature makes a mention of the three powerful kingdoms of Tamil Nadu each with their flag, emblems and flowers.

Thus the Pandya kings wore Neem flower garlands, the Chera kings Palmyra flower garlands and the Cholas flower garlands of the fig tree.

Tamil literature also classified lands into five natural geographical areas and gave the name of a dominant flowering plant to each area.

- Mullai (मुल्लै), a variety of Jasmine, stands for the forest area.
- Kurinji (कुरिंजी), a mountain flower, stands for mountainous region.
- Marutham (मरुथम), a tree with red flowers, stands for patoral region
- Neythal (नेइथल), a water flower, stands for the sandy sea shore and
- Palai (पालै) an ever green tree growing in arid areas, stands for arid lands.

Another unique feature of Tamil culture is the association of flowers with battlefield activities. Vanchi (वांची) was the flower worn during the invasion of the enemy's territory and Vaakai (वाकै) was worn after emerging victorious in battle.

Owing to this long history of association with flower and flower garlands it shall be in the fitness of things if flower shows and competitions are held in every district of Tamil Nadu and those prize winners also felicitated at the Ooty flower show every year. This will help to bring forth the best of forming talent in every part of the state, and also enable the spread of awareness about the horticultural floral range of the state. A sound and light show in the evening during the 5 days of the Flower Show depicting the significance of the various flowers of Tamil Nadu and their association with Tamil culture and literature will also do justice to the glory of the floral heritage of the state.

I congratulate the prize winners who have emerged successful in what must have been a very tough competition. There are nearly 699 prize winners who have been honoured at this flower show competition. It is a matter of great satisfaction for me to see the tremendous interest and enthusiasm that is being shown to participate in the Ooty flower show year after year. With the concern of people to conserving nature and natural resources increasing year after year, I am sure that the coming years will see more colourful flower shows and greater participation and innovation in displaying the exhibits.

I extend my best wishes and greetings to the district administration and the State department of Horticulture who have organised the flower show with great care and attention. May fortune shine on the State of Tamil Nadu and the district of the Nilgiris in abundant measure and may prosperity bless all our homes in all its blissful entirety.

On this occasion, **Thiru. Gagandeep Singh Bedi, I.A.S.**, Agricultural Production Commissioner and Principal Secretary to Government, **Dr.N.Subbaiyan, I.A.S.**, Director of Horticulture and Plantation Crops, **Thirumathi. J.Innocent Divya, I.A.S.**, District Collector, Nilgiris, **Thirumathi. D. Shanmuga Priya**, Superintendent of Police **Thiru. P. Selvaraj**, DRO, **Thiru. Sivasubramaniam Samraj**, Joint Director of Horticulture and other dignitaries participated.

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Raj Bhavan, Chennai -22

Date : 21.05.2019

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Joint Director (PR)