



Carrot farmer

Arvind bhai Vallabh bhai Marvaniya



Development of farming of carrots as a vegetable for the consumer market

There was a time when carrot was just another fodder meant for cattle. Being a root vegetable, it was difficult even to extract it from the soil. However, the knowledge that this root can be used as a vegetable was first discovered by a small farmer from Junagadh in Gujarat. Around 60 to 65 years ago, he introduced this vegetable into the markets. He has made a highly valuable contribution towards the growth of Saurashtra farmers through his research in the sowing methods for carrot crops.

Vallabh bhai Vashram bhai Marvaniya returned to his birthplace Bamdhrol village from his maternal uncle's place. He had attended school till grade 5. Around 65 years ago, rotary equipment was used for irrigation. Vallabh bhai had a field of about 6 acres, where he cultivated crops like pulses, food grains and groundnuts.

Gradually, he started cultivating vegetables and crops meant for cattle fodder. These included maize, jowar, *rajko* (a kind of grass meant for fodder) and carrot. As a boy who had just dropped out of school, Vallabh bhai progressed with the business of vegetables. He once thought why not include carrot among the vegetables he was selling in the market. Being a root vegetable, extracting it from the soil was a tough challenge for a young boy. Vallabh bhai expressed his desire to his father who branded him a fool for coming up with this idea instead of supporting it. At that time carrots were used only as fodder and so his idea was obviously termed as ridiculous.

Time elapsed but Vallabh bhai had not given up on his idea. One fine day, he used the rotary

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irrigation equipment and was able to extract 19 kilos of carrot. He then sold them in the market for an astounding Rs 4 per kilo which brought immense joy to his father who was finally convinced of Vallabh bhai's conviction. This is how carrot started being consumed as a vegetable.

This incident took place around 1943. With time, the production of carrots in this humble farmer's field brought him immense prosperity. His fields expanded from 6 acres to 50 acres, all thanks to carrot farming. Vallabh bhai was motivated to start producing seeds for sowing carrots and in 1985 he decided to start working in this direction. He has acquired fame for selling the best quality of seeds today. The seeds produced today are only developed in his fields, under his expert guidance.

The variety of carrot seed developed in his farm is named Madhuvan Carrot seed. Vallabh bhai has now stabilized his younger son Arvind in this processing. Any farmer visiting the Madhuvan farm gets a booklet free of charge which has been penned by Vallabh bhai. Mukundbhai Hirapara has made a great contribution in spreading this information. Vallabh bhai also has many friends who have helped him develop and spread carrot farming in the Saurashtra region.



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