

1. Development of home gardens at tsunami affected Madiha, Southern Sri Lanka

K.K.I.U. Arunakumara¹, S. Subasignhe¹ and B.C. Walpola², M.K.T.K. Amarasinghe¹, I.R.Palihakkara¹ and H.K.M.S.Kumarasinghe¹

¹Department of Crop Science, Faculty of Agriculture, University of Ruhuna, Kamburupitiya, Sri Lanka

²Department of Soil Science, Faculty of Agriculture, University of Ruhuna, Kamburupitiya, Sri Lanka

The present paper discussed the activities carried out at Madiha, Southern Sri Lanka in order to improve the Tsunami affected home gardens. An extensive survey was conducted to assess the prevailing situation of the home gardens and the development strategies were then been formulated. Thirty home gardens of the affected area were randomly selected to study the composition and the current status of the vegetation. In addition, soil samples were collected from selected lands and the quality of soil was assessed. The area of the gardens varies from 5 perches to 1 acre and the vegetation is dominated by coconut plants. The damage to the village has reported to be extended inland up to about 500 m from the coastline causing physical and structural damages to the vegetation. Most of the home gardens in the investigated area were reported to be affected by erosion of soil or deposition of transported sand and the damages to the vegetation varied depending on the location and the species. The impact of Tsunami on coconut plants seems not very significant in long term as no growth retard or yield reduction is currently been reported. Even though the coconut plantations were reported to be affected by deposition of transported sand, no structural damages were reported. In addition, some perennial species such as breadfruit which were severely affected by the Tsunami seemed to have gradual recovery. However, some morphological abnormalities in some perennials such as papaw and mango remained to be shown even three years after the disturbance. Vegetables and other annual crop species have begun to establish well and nicely grown ornamentals can be found in most of the home gardens. However, commercial scale cultivation of any species except coconut is yet to be started.

Development of home gardens was initiated with 15 farmers and they were well trained on gardening. The first training workshop was conducted at the Faculty of Agriculture, University of Ruhuna while the other was at the resource centre Madiha. Selection criteria of crop species for their own lands, pre-treatment of planting materials, land preparation and crop establishment, manuring and composting, weeding, irrigating, disease and pest management, training and pruning, harvesting and post-harvest care etc., were the sub-topics on which farmers were trained. Special attention was paid on changing attitudes of farmers, in particular, in the areas of gardening without chemicals, sustainable land management and nutrient recycling etc. Selected farmers were initially provided with vegetable seeds in order to start with cultivation. Gardening was monitored routinely and whenever they come across a difficulty special guidance was given. At the end of six months period, it was observed that all most all the selected farmers are growing vegetables nicely. Furthermore, as it was noticed that more and more farmers are willing to joint, the gardening programme was planned to be extended up to 25 farmers and more