

Prof. **Dr. SATHIAMOORTHY**, born on 27th March, 1944 studied B.Sc. (Ag), M.Sc (Ag) and Ph.D in Horticulture at Tamil Nadu Agricultural University (TNAU), Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu State, India.

He started his career as Research Officer at the Central Banana Research Station, Aduthurai, India during 1965. He worked in different capacity in Wetland Banana Research Station, Gardenland Banana Research Station and other Horticultural Research stations, before being evaluated as Professor & Head of the Department of Fruit Science at the TNAU, Horticultural College and Research Institute, Coimbatore.

After 33 years of experience in research, teaching and development, he was given a coveted post of the Director, National Research Centre for Bananas (NRCB), and Trichy in which capacity he worked from 1999 to 2006 and led a team of well-trained scientists to do research on various aspects of banana including organic farming.

During four decades of research he has contributed a lot to banana industry of India which is the largest producer of bananas in the world.

Organic farming techniques have been standardized for bananas and papayas. Particularly, he has studied in detail, the management of major parasite nematodes of bananas and papayas.

Among other things, he has made extensive work on the effect of neem oil cake on nematodes and the changes in soil health. Neem oil cake has profound effect on nematode multiplication rate. Within a season, the nematode population comes down to below pathogenic level. In the long run, chemicals can be withdrawn totally.

Neem cake, after decomposition, undergoes changes resulting in assimilable proteins fractions necessary for the growth of favourable bacteria and fungus, which improve the growth of bananas and papayas. Especially, the soil actinomycetes growth is significantly higher. Soil enzymes level improves favouring the root activity of crops. Thus, neem product has favourable effect on overall soil eco-system,

Emulsified neem oil as spray reduces the incidence of leaf spot diseases, besides checking the population of aphids and sucking insects which transmit virus diseases. Neem products in combination with other organic plant protection products have significant effect.

He has written several research papers in national and international journals. He has also written many booklets and book chapters. He has attended many international conferences and symposia.

Recognizing his services, International Network for Improvement of Bananas and Plantains (INIBAP), Montpellier, France presented a **Plaque of Honour** during **Pro Musa Breeder's** meet held at Coimbatore, India.

In acknowledgement of his outstanding contributions, Asia- Pacific Network for Banana and Plantain (BAPAPNET), Philippines, honoured him with the prestigious award of **PISANG RAJA** (Banana King) 2004, at the International BAPNET Steering Committee meeting held in Guangzhou, China on 23, Nov, 2004. He has many other awards. He has traveled widely.

Besides, bananas, he has worked in papaya, citrus, sapota, avocado and pine apple.

He is currently a Consultant Horticulturist and taken charge as Chief Advisor - Plant Protection in Ecots.