

Forest Home Garden in Maharashtra, India

GENERAL INFORMATION	
<i>Sources of information of the practice</i>	Sustainet, Sustainable Agriculture Information Networks, cooperative project of the German Council for Sustainable Development. Result of the workshop entitled Evaluation of project experiences through local partners (self-evaluation) and assessment of each project's Scaling-up potential , held in India
<i>Relevant contacts</i>	Project Secretariat, GTZ, Dag-Hammarskjöld-Weg 1-5, Postfach 5180 D, 65726 Eschborn, Germany
<i>Useful links</i>	Sustainet www.sustainet.org
INFORMATION ABOUT THE PROGRAMME OR PROJECT PROMOTING THE PRACTICE (IF APPLICABLE)	
<i>Programme or project</i>	Forest Home Garden
<i>Time frame</i>	1994 - 1999
<i>Donor</i>	Indo-German bilateral funding
<i>Implementer of the programme or project</i>	<u>Local NGO</u> : Rural Communes
LOCATION OF THE PRACTICE	
<i>Region</i>	Asia
<i>Country</i>	India
<i>Province, Districts, Villages</i>	Mumbai, Raigad District, State of Maharashtra
<i>Climatic zone</i>	Moist semi-arid
<i>Other descriptive information</i>	-
INFORMATION ABOUT THE PRACTICE	
<i>Practice category</i>	Managing natural resources sustainably
<i>Practice type</i>	Technology for assuring adequate nutrition and health Technology for improving farm productivity sustainably
<i>Sector</i>	Forest management and conservation
<i>Institutions fostering the practice</i>	<u>Local NGO</u> : Rural Communes
<i>Beneficiaries of the practice</i>	Local farmers
<i>Users of the practice</i>	Local farmers
<i>Natural resource used or accessed (if applicable)</i>	Forested land
BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE PRACTICE	
<i>Background/problem statement</i>	The area of the villages of Wawoshi and Shedashe, in the Raigad district of Western Maharashtra is moderately hilly and is characterized by a heavy monsoon between June and September (average annual rainfall 2500mm) and a hot summer with considerable water shortage. The weather is humid almost throughout the year. Over most of the district, the main problems are denudation of forests, habitat degradation, erosion and rapid conversion of land for non-agricultural purposes. These environmental problems have persisted for the past 3-4 decades and had changed people's attitudes towards the land they owned. Very little was done for long-term benefit and people had more or less lost their faith in agriculture. The major causes of concern in the area are degradation as a result of unsustainable agricultural practices, fires and over grazing. Summer water scarcity, rain dependant agriculture on small land holdings and low soil productivity has resulted in

	poverty, malnutrition and migration. Lack of transportation, information, marketing, healthy employment and community spirit has made the area totally vulnerable to external commercial forces.
<i>Approach followed</i>	<p>The NGO Rural Communes felt that the area had tremendous potential for regeneration, especially since the climate and soil of the area was favorable for forest growth. These small oases would help people begin to look at their land differently and give them more reason to care for it, make long-term plans and reap the benefits. The forest home gardens were part of a broader watershed development initiative. Rural Communes staff and the village watershed committee, which was formed with representatives of different tribal and non-tribal communities from different hamlets in the area, conducted a baseline survey using participatory methodology. They found that local people had certain resources such as land and a small amount of water that could be used to grow fruits and fresh vegetables. The first outline plan of the forest home gardens emerged from this survey.</p> <p>An initial group of ten interested farmers dug pits for the first set of fruit trees, set up a live fence around demarcated plots using thorny shrubs such as Euphorbia and multipurpose trees like Teak and Thespesia. Following this, the first set of grafted mango and cashew trees were planted at these ten sites. Other fruit trees, climbers, spices and medicinal plants were planted after. Rural Communes provided seeds and saplings. The plants were positioned, spaced and located in terms of soil depth, moisture, nutrients and sunlight needed according to their requirements. For example, the trees, climbers, shrubs and herbs were arranged in a manner so as to efficiently use all sunlight available and also provide shade to those plants which preferred shade. Mulching with weeds and grass reduced water loss. Many of the vegetables grown were those which were hardy, resilient and able to grow well under local conditions. As the watershed development work progressed in the village, the underground water table improved along with the quantity and quality of water in the village well. A wider diversity of plants could therefore be grown.</p> <p>Farmers benefited from the establishment of home gardens by getting good quality fresh fruits, spices, fresh vegetables, medicinal plants and fodder for cattle throughout the year and by saving a considerable amount of money. Additionally, by using branches, twigs and other surplus wood from the forest home gardens, local people do not have to rely on the forest for wood to the extent that they did earlier. Women, who are responsible for wood collection, will be the biggest beneficiaries of this, since they will be able to save considerable time and energy.</p>
<i>Innovative elements</i>	-
<i>Impacts on natural resource base</i>	<p><u>Actual</u>: Increased awareness about forest fires and lower incidence of fires.</p> <p><u>Expected</u>: Once the number of people with Forest Home Gardens reaches a critical mass, it is projected that systems for managing cattle not only during the rainy season, but also in the dry season will be set up. This will indirectly benefit the forest.</p>
<i>Impacts on livelihood of the practice users</i>	<p><u>Actual</u>: Increased food security and living standards. Increased self-sufficiency</p>
<i>Other impacts</i>	<p><u>Expected</u>: Encourage people participation and improved socio-economic status</p>
<i>General success factors</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Availability of uncultivated land • Self-help groups or women's groups can grow planting material and saplings locally
<i>Technology success factors</i>	<p>Address farmer needs, priorities and management Improve quality and nutritional value Integrates crops, livestock, trees and fisheries</p>

<i>Institutional success factors</i>	Access to inputs and resources Farmer's capacity for adoption of the technology
<i>Problems remaining to be resolved</i>	-
<i>Keywords</i>	Agricultural development, Agriculture, Diversification, Empowerment, Food production, Forest resources, Forests, Home gardening, Household consumption, Nutrition