

1

## AGRICULTURE

We continue to be a member of the permaculture network and this year there was greater, more serious, and more in-depth interaction between the five groups. Our search for methods to lead to sustainable agriculture has drawn the attention of various NGOs. It has been decided -that each present member of the network will act as the training centre for the groups in its area that have expressed a desire to join the network. Once our building is ready for use we hope to operate as the resource and training centre for a large part of the district. The work on our own experimental and demonstration plots with field crop rotation continued. We had four such plots in three villages. We also had two plots for experimenting with vegetables. All data are being meticulously recorded.

After a gap of two years we returned to making kitchen gardens and this will be a mayor thrust of ours in the coming months. This year we made 10 such gardens in two villages.

We carried out various experiments with bio-fertilizers Mostly on our own plots Azolla used in the Lice gelds of Andharmanik mul- very well; but it did not do so at Chandalati However azolla growth was uniformly good in the chambers prepared for the purpose in all five villages.

Rhizobium was used in moong and masur in two villages. Azotabactor was used with rice in two villages. Dhaincha was used as green manure in three villages.

Our attempt to grow glyricidia trees- from 140 grafts brought from Chuchura was a failure. We carried out some experiments with vermicompost and local earthworms at Chandalati. Two compost pits were used in two villages. Tobacco leaf solution was tried as pesticide for the eggplant crop with good results. We did "kul" tree grafting on 24 trees. Altogether 0,966 Supari seedlings were grown in our nurseries in five villages.

Interest is being gradually generated among farmers in our alternative ways, and this was the first year we formally discussed our experiments and goals with them. We sat with them thrice in o villages and. helped one of them install a pedal pump for ground water.

Our agricultural workers attended 12 internal workshops at Andharmanik. They also attended various external trainings, totalling 58 training days. Our theatre group performed eight times a play to spread the message of sustainable agriculture. It also took part in six workshops and its plays on blood donation, exploitation of women and health problems ware much appreciated in various villages.

2

That, then, is a summary of our activities during- the year. I fear there is not much here to thrill the lover of the spectacular, or to interest the chronicler of the sensational. We have thought big but remained small for that gives us freedom from bureaucratic deadweight and keeps its flexible so that we can take decisions faster and identify mistakes quicker: We have kept our priorities clear our projects -not be -addressed to the most deprived sections; the goal is to make the, villages—"swanirvar' or self-reliant, and for that it is essential that the villagers feel self-confident, and we provide their the means to and intensify the faith that they -can do most things by themselves; we have: to keep the environment sad the local culture intact and so cannot impose novelty or technology harmful in the long run: we must also not take up any project that is incapable of being replicated, either because it is too expensive .or because it calls for investment of resources not easily available locally. So we proceed slowly, but steadily, not bestowing benefits on the people but working in close co-operation with them.