BIO-INPUT RESOURCE CENTER

Natural Farming Technical Process Manual



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Published by:

National Coalition for Natural Farming C/O WASSAN Plot. No. 685, Road. No. 12 Narasimha Swamy Colony, Nagole Hyderabad Telangana, India - 500 068 www.nfcoalition.org

Version 1.0 ; September 2022

Authors:

- National Coalition for Natural Farming Secretariat Members :
- Mr.Kale Venkata Homendra, former Program Associate (Integrated farming systems) and
- Mr.Abhishek Singhania, former Capacity Building Coordinator
- Mr.Kuriakose Jr, BRC Associate;

Reviewers:

- Mr.D.Balaraju, Scientist Plant Health, KVK Yagantipalli, Andhra Pradesh
- Mr.Ajit Kelkar, Director, Abhinav Organics, Madhya Pradesh
- Mr.Ravi Kelkar, Director, Abhinav Organics, Madhya Pradesh
- Ravindra A, Executive Director, WASSAN

Editor: Riya Rachel Simon, Communication Coordinator, National Coalition for Natural Farming

Publication supported by: ATE Chandra Foundation, AgroEcology Fund, India Climate Collaborative, Caring Friends, Children's Investment Fund Foundation and Duleep Matthai Foundation

Design & Layout :

Sanskaar Singh

Photographs:

Foundation for Ecological Services WASSAN Sahaj Samruddha National Coalition for Natural Farming

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Acknowledgment

For the completion of this manual, individuals and institutions from various parts of the country have provided their time, knowledge and energy. NCNF would like to express sincere gratitude to all its Coalition partners and members who gladly engaged with us for the background research, enthusiastically participated in the multiple training programmes and eagerly shared their on-ground implementation knowledge.

We would like to thank the faculty members of KVK Yagantipalli, Andhra Pradesh and Abhinav Organics, Madhya Pradesh for providing support as technical resource persons in preparing this manual.

And offer our gratitude to the team of reviewers - Mr.D.Balaraju, Scientist plant health, KVK Yagantipalli ; Mr.Ajit Kelkar and Mr.Ravi Kelkar, Directors, Abhinav Organics Indore and Ravindra A, Executive Director, WASSAN.

Finally, all this would not have been possible without the continuous guidance and mentorship of Ravindra A, Executive Director WASSAN and Dr Sabyasachi Das, Director RRA N.

Acknowledging that there is a lot more scope for additions be it in the processes laid out or the diversity of inputs; this is only the first version of the manual. We openly invite all to share additions and suggestions, thus beginning a continuous documentation process of agro-ecological input support systems.

Kuriakose Jr Riya Rachel Simon

National Coalition for Natural Farming





Executive Summary

Agroecology is gaining ground in India and internationally. The broader principles of agroecology were laid out by FAO. The recent announcement by Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi, is further emphasizing on transforming the agriculture paradigm towards natural farming. Currently, India has more than a million farmers practicing agroecological farming but many of them struggle in sustaining it and subsequently are seen using synthetic fertilisers and chemical pesticides in the longer run.

Adopting natural farming practices and sustaining them poses many challenges for the farmers; particularly poor knowledge dissemination, increased efforts to procure raw materials, and lack of access to valued markets amongst others. Of which access to farm inputs can be cited due to the following reasons :

- Lack of exposure and knowledge of different bio-formulations and bio-inputs
- Unavailability of raw materials
- Lack of knowledge on handling, usage and storage of inputs
- Limited hand holding support
- Extra efforts required in procurement of the raw materials and their subsequent preparation
- Maintaining quality of the prepared bio-inputs

Bio-Resource Input Centers' (BRCs) are one of the possible input support systems that could help in resolving this issue of accessibility to natural farm inputs. Its promotion, as a single stop shop for all bio input needs will not only help farmers to learn but also adopt these technologies in their farm to sustain their livelihood and to make it professionally viable and profitable.

As the first version of the publication, the following pages, offers itself as a manual to set up such a center. Divided in three parts; the part I captures the enterprise aspects of the BRC. Laying out the center's objective; its desired audience, stakeholders and their respective roles; possible business models catering to diversity of economic demographics, and giving the outcomes that could be expected from the BRC.

While part 2 of the manual lays out the step by step process of setting up a BRC. Giving details of the physical infrastructure and equipment list required to set it up. Part 3 of the manual lays out details of the variety of products that could be sold in the center. The manual captures the biopesticides, biofertilizers, nutrient management, botanicals and non-botanicals based inputs. Details of the different inputs, its preparation, storage, required raw materials, and even the how and when these inputs could be used are mentioned. Thereby giving both the theoretical and practical aspects of the inputs.

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Part-I Bio-Input Resource Center





Introduction Part 1: Bio-Input Resource Center

Agro-ecology is gaining ground in India and internationally. The broader principles of agroecology were laid out by FAO. Niti Ayog has endorsed Natural Farming as one of the important directions for Indian agriculture; several programs at state and central levels (such as BPKP) are promoting natural farming. Currently, India has more than a million farmers practicing agroecological farming but many of them struggle in sustaining it and subsequently are seen using synthetic fertilizers and chemical pesticides in the longer run. Adopting agroecology based farming practices and sustaining them poses many challenges for the farmers particularly **poor knowledge dissemination, increased efforts to procure raw materials, and lack of access to valued markets amongst others.** Of which access to farm inputs can be cited due to the following reasons :

- > Lack of exposure and knowledge of different bio-formulations and bio-inputs
- > Unavailability of raw materials
- Lack of knowledge on handling, usage and storage of inputs
- Limited hand holding support
- Extra efforts required in procurement of the raw materials and their subsequent preparation
- Maintaining quality of the prepared bio-inputs

Promotion of Bio Resource Centers, as a single stop shop for all organic input needs will not only help farmers to learn but also adopt these technologies in their farm to sustain their livelihood and to make it professionally viable and profitable.





A Bio-Input Resource Centre (BRC), where time tested, locally prepared Inputs/formulations utilizing biological entities or biologically derived inputs useful for improving soil health, crop growth, pest or disease management and habitat management are made available for purchase by farmers in a defined geographical area.

The BRCs serve five purposes :

- > Maintaining and sale of cultures of bio-fertilizers and bio-pesticides for multiplication and use by farmers
- > Preparation and sale of ready-to-use organic inputs
- > Training farmers on the preparations of botanical extracts and animal based inputs
- Sharing knowledge on natural farming practices
- > Sale of pheromone traps, lures, sticky traps and others.

Audience group

BRCs are intended to be for-profit enterprises run by individuals or groups who have expertise on Natural Farming, a demo plot to demonstrate and some capital to invest. Their capacity building on recommended package of practices, production and handling of bioformulants, building a market and running a venture would be essential. Natural Farmers or those interested in Natural Farming in the neighboring villages would be the ideal customers of BRCs.

Certain prerequisites for potential BRC entrepreneurs

- Could be an SHG or a family
- > 3 to 5 years Of Natural Farming experience
- Recognized as a progressive farmer in the village
- > A demo plot for field visit
- > Basic education to maintain data records and capture farmer feedback
- > Potentially have a shed for production, storage and sales of bio-inputs (otherwise the capital expenses would be significantly higher) which is attached to their home or farm
- Financially sound enough to share the costs of setting up the BRC
- > Should have access to cattle by products (either own or through village dairy) 3
- Good communication skills



Objectives

4

Part 1 : Bio-Input Resource Center

The following support could be provided to BRC entrepreneurs from the project for BRC

- Capacity building Technical trainings (PoPs of the local crops, production and handling of necessary bio-inputs, quality control)
- Support system setup (Access to resource organizations, other BRC entrepreneurs, knowledge documents, monthly Zoom sessions for a year)
- Exposure visit to other BRCs

An example of the potential changes that may be visualized :

- Establishing sources for procuring quality mother cultures, pheromone traps and other relevant inputs.
- > Connections with microfinance institutions for loan
- Business model with a 3 year plan
- > Refresher trainings

Сгор	Item	Present Practice	Visualized Change in practice
Rice	Eco engineering	No specific practice	Gliricidia / Redgram on bunds
Rice	Soil fertility	FYM/Fertilizers	Green manure / Jeevamrut
Rice	Seed / Seedling treatment	No Practice	Pseudomonas /Azospirillum / Beejamrut
Rice	BPH / Leaf / folder/Stem borer	Imidacloprid / Dinoteferon	Ph traps / Botanicals / NSKE /Beauveria
Rice	Blast/Blight	Tricyclazole / Hexaconazole	Pseudomonas/Botanicals
Groundnut	Eco engineering	No specific practice	Pongamia/Neem for field borders
Groundnut	Soil fertility	FYM/Fertilizers	Ghana Jeevamrut
Groundnut	Seed / Soil treatment	M-45	Bijamrith, Trichoderma
Groundnut	Sucking pests	Imidacloprid / Mono	Sticky traps / NSKE / Verticillium
Groundnut	Leaf spot / stem rot	Saaf, Hexaconazole	Botanicals, Pseudomonas



Stakeholders & Roles

Part 1 : Bio-Input Resource Center

Possible role of CSO

- Prepare a 3 year business plan
- Selection of BRC entrepreneurs
- Sign MoU with BRC entrepreneurs
- Training of BRC entrepreneurs on technical and financial aspects of BRC
- Selection of Gram Panchayats
- Market Estimations
- Provide a grant (or a loan) for the capital expenditures (equipment and shed) of setting up BRC and a line of credit to the entrepreneur for handling operational expenses
- > Extensive marketing support to the BRCs
- Sales support through CRPs or the field functionaries acting as commission agents. FPOs could directly sell the products
- Performance evaluation of BRCs
- > Market assurance for six months to a year after initiating a BRC

Role of BRC entrepreneurs

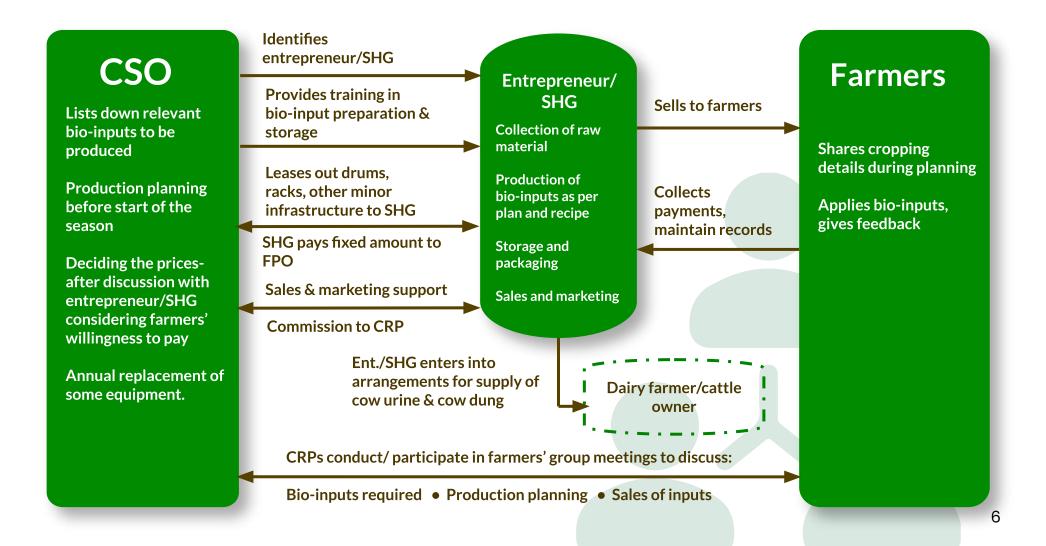
- Maintaining and sale of cultures of bio fertilizers and bio pesticides for multiplication and use by farmers
- Preparation and sale of ready-to-use organic inputs
- > Training farmers on the preparations of inputs
- Sale of other inputs pheromone traps, lures, sticky traps and others.
- Capturing farmer feedback
- > Preparation of monthly accounts and share it with the CSO
- Invest a small amount for establishing and running the BRC



Stakeholders & Roles

Part 1 : Bio-Input Resource Center

BIO-INPUT RESOURCE CENTER





Stakeholders & Roles



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Farmers

- Visiting BRCs for knowledge exchange and purchase of raw materials or ready-to-use inputs
- Share cropping details with the BRC entrepreneurs
- > Provide feedback to the farmers after the use of the inputs

Others

Panchayats can play a very important role. They could support in providing land for BRC setup at extremely nominal rates. Their support could provide a big boost in the uptake of natural farming in the villages, thereby giving marketing support to the BRC.

Agriculture department (KVK, Block Development officers, Agriculture officers) can support largely in terms of providing access to various Govt schemes and technical training on various inputs amongst others.

Criteria for selection of Gram Panchayat

- > CSO to be active in the panchayat for the next 3 years
- At Least 1000 farmers pursuing Natural farming or interested in it.





As a result of discussions two models have emerged with a lot of smaller variations. A *low investment low income model (LIM)* for tribal areas and the other could be a *high investment high income model (HIM)*.

Low investment low income model (LIM)

➤ In the LIM model, a BRC entrepreneur gets a loan from an FPO at a 10% annual interest rate which is spent on capital expenses. It is assumed that the shed will be available with the BRC entrepreneur and only the equipment will have to be purchased. The duration of the loan is 3 years with annual EMI payments. It has been assumed that the equipment purchased would be depreciating assets with a life of 1 to 4 years. In the cost estimations, the packaging, branding and marketing costs have been estimated. The packaging and branding are extremely low cost versions. Labor costs have been considered, however it is recommended the family of the entrepreneur provide support in the production and sales thereby increasing the margins for the entrepreneur. Only 3 products are sold - Jeevamrut, Handikhata and Nimastra. The model also clearly shows that it is not a round the year kind of a work but seasonal work, in this particular case the May to November has been considered operational months. It will depend on the cropping seasons taken up in a particular region. It shows an estimated Profit and Loss statement with a growth trajectory for the first 3 years. It is a direct B2C model. Revenue through services has not been considered in this model. The cash flow indicates that a working capital of Rs 2132 is sufficient for the BRC to begin besides the support received from the FPO. Considering the low returns, LIM is more suited for individual champion farmers with support from their families and not SHGs.

High investment high income model HIM

> In the HIM model, largely the capital inflow comes as a grant from the CSO body helping the champion farmer or the SHG to set up the BRC. In this particular case, we are considering a mix of B2B and B2C models. It is assumed that land would be provided by the Panchayat or the SHG members free of cost. However, the construction of the shed and purchase of equipment have been accounted for. The equipment costs are significantly higher than the LIM models because of the increase in the range of products and inclusion of certain microbial cultures (azotobacter, trichoderma, verticillium) which need specialized equipment for production. It has been assumed that the equipment purchased would be depreciating assets with a life of 1 to 10 years and accordingly depreciation has been accounted for in the costs. Besides the inputs that are prepared and sold at the BRC, a service component has been included for inputs (Waste Decomposer, Jeewamrutham) that need to be prepared in bulk and transportation for the same would be extremely expensive, entrepreneurs will go to the farmers field to make such inputs and be paid a service fee for the same. Also the product list includes certain pheromone traps and sticky sheets which have to be procured and sold directly, NPM (non pesticidal management) techniques involve such methods. It has been assumed that 50% of the target area would be covered in the first year and all estimations have been made for the first year. On an average the margins have been kept at 50%, lower margins for products which are easy to prepare with a long shelf life or simply traded through the BRC (Pheromone traps). 10% commission has been assumed for the sale's representatives (FPOs and field representatives of NGO). BRC entrepreneurs will need a loan of approximately 1L as working capital and will have to pay an interest for the same. Some products will remain unsold and subsequently there will be some losses. A target area of 1000 acres has been considered out of which only 30% would be captured in the first year and subsequently expansion would take place. 8



Business Models



"Difference between LIM and HIM"

- Lead facilitating agency could be an FPO or a CSO
- BRC could be run by an SHG or a champion farmer. LIM is more suited for a champion farmer and HIM is more suited for an SHG
- Financial investments could be met through multiple channels Loan or a grant from an NGO or an FPO, Government based grant could be a possibility, Panchayat support to meet some of the costs, the BRC entrepreneur could be making a small investment
- LIM is generally a B2B model, HIM could be B2B, B2C or a hybrid model
- Largely, the product and services selection is dependent on the cropping pattern and outlook of the farmers in the village. Services such as going to the farmer's home to make the inputs could also be a possibility. Paid training courses could also be conducted. Besides raw materials or ready to use inputs, other products could be sold such as seeds and seedlings. Matured BRCs could also be facilitating sales of end produce for the farmers.

Elaborate models OF both HIM and LIM can be shared upon request.







Steps to setup a BRC

Part 1 : Bio-Input Resource Center

Step No.	Description	Remarks		
1	Select BRC entrepreneurs	Criteria for selection of entrepreneurs has been shared as part of the		
2	Selection of Panchayat / Target villages	Villages that can be catered through this BRC		
3	Capacity Building of entrepreneurs on BRC	Capacity Building to cover technical guid- ance on inputs and farm practices as well as business model preparations		
4	Selection of products to be sold	Select products whose demand is high or anticipated to be high		
5	Finalise the prices of the products	Generally a 40% - 50% margin is suggested		
6	Identifying reliable sources for mother culture of microbial inoculums	Inoculums like Verticillium, Pseudomonas, Azotobacter, PSB, KSB, others		
7	Establish an investment plan (Capital Costs, Operational credit, Marketing costs, Buyback costs)	A small investment must come from the BRC entrepreneur as well		
8	Create business model for each BRC	Soft copy of Sample Business model can be shared upon request		
9	Exposure visit to other BRCs	-		
10	Setup BRC shed(separate shed for production and storage)	One time expense, sometimes the shed is available with the entrepreneurs		



Steps to setup a BRC

Part 1 : Bio-Input Resource Center

Step No.	Tasklist	Remarks
11	Purchase of equipments	One time expense, approximate cost would be INR 60,000/-
12	Monitor quarterly accounts and performance evaluation	Soft copy of template to capture accounts can be shared upon request
13	Create a marketing model	How will the BRC products be marketed? Can it be through wall paintings or banners across villages? Or shall there be a one time activity of running a Public announcement system across the villages? Can reg- ular messaging from entrepreneurs to potential cus- tomers help? Etc.
14	Create a sales model	Can the local FPOs, CRPs become sales agents?
15	Conduct marketing exercise across the target villages	Promotion of BRC products in all the target villages
16	Identify stakeholders and their roles	Can the local FPO, Panchayat, SHGs and other village level institutions support?
17	Buyback agreement with entrepreneurs for unsold products at cost to cost basis	A buyback agreement for the first 6 to 9 months till the monthly demand pattern is established
18	Q&A session with resource agency every month	Facilitate monthly session for entrepreneurs to engage with resource persons for support
19	Yearly quality tests of inputs	Will help in maintaining standards and may increase trust factor on the products being sold
20	Refresher training by sharing digital content with BRC entrepreneurs	



Expected Outcome

Part 1 : Bio-Input Resource Center

It is expected that the CSOs will open up new BRCs or upgrade existing BRCs that will leverage the experience of the existing BRCs.

Considering the fact that a BRC reduces the entry barrier to Natural Farming, increased uptake should be seen in the project areas since

- > Effort required to practise Natural Farming will reduce
- > Productivity of crops, vegetables, and fruit crops in the villages will improve
- Confidence levels of farmers with regard to use of organic and bio inputs will go up
- Quality of soil improved for future of agriculture
- The improved production levels of the village will pave a way to development of infrastructure facilities like Storage godowns, Market outlets etc.
- > With increased family incomes, quality of life, family expenditure on education, health and amenities will improve
- Formation of commodity interest groups, FPOs may be possible that enables them for improved bargaining power, marketing and facilities.
- Few of the trained youth may assume the role of service providers in the domain of sustainable agriculture technology, provision of inputs, custom hiring and marketing etc.



Part-II Setting up a BRC



Equipement list

Part 2 : Annexure 1 and 2

14

Equipment List

Sl.No	Item	QTY	Unit Cost (INR.)	Total Cost (INR.)	
I	Plastic Drums 200 ltd	8	1,000	8,000	
2	Plastic Drums 100 It with lid	8	500	4,000	
3	Gas Stove/Connection	l set		7,000	
4	Buckets and tubs	20	160	3,200	
5	Cans 20 lt	10	350	3,500	
6	Plastic drums 50 It with tap and lid	10	500	5,000	
7	Steel vessels big	5	800	4,000	
8	Wet grinder	1		9,000	
9	Plastic trays	12	150`x 12	1,800	
ΙΟ	PP covers & other packing material			1,000	
II	Sealer	1		1,500	
I2	Racks	2	1,500	5,000	
13	Tunnel shade net 100 sqm & Pro trays	Qs	2,500	6,000	
I4	Prestige Pressure cooker (20 It)	1		5,000	
15	Miscellaneous	Qs		5,000	
	TOTAL			69,000.00	



Physical infrastructure

Part 2 : BRC Set up

15

For establishing a BRC, the following Infrastructure and Equipments would be needed

Physical Infrastructure

- Working Area Minimum of 5 cents of open space with entrepreneurs (Either owned/leased) for preliminary preparation of the raw materials, grading, washing, grinding etc. and a closed room (space) for housing of equipment, handling preparations, mixtures, storage etc.
- Room/Space for showcasing prepared products (Service point) : Space for showcasing
- Power connection at working area : Single phase

- Water facility both at working area and service area : Clean potable water should be available; preferable if it can have an overhead tank with tap connection.
- Furniture : At least 1 table and chair for operator, a bench for clients; Two racks for showcasing products at Service Centre.
- > Plastic ware : (These are indicative in nature, actual items would be determined in due course of time)



VAVAVAVAVAVAVA



Annexure II

Part 2 : BRC Inputs

The possible items in BRC could be

For Improving soil fertility and soil health

- > Seeds of green manuring crops.
- Vermiculture / compost
- > Neem / karanj cake
- > Cow dung/cow urine
- Microbial preparations like Jeevamrut, Ghana Jeevamrith, Waste Decomposer, etc.
- Other inputs such as VAM, bv, Rhizobium, PSB, Azospirillum, Azotobacter, Potash / Zinc Mobilizers etc.

For pest or disease management

- Seeds / seedlings of trap crops
- Botanical decoctions like Panchagavya, Dashparni, Neemastra, brahmastra, agniastra, NSKE
- Bio pesticides Beauveria, Verticillium, Trichoderma, Pseudomonas, NPV formulations / cultures
 Pheromone traps, sticky traps, lights traps

For habitat management:

Seeds / Seedlings of Glyricidia, Drumstick, Pongam, Neem

- Seeds for Border crop/Intercrop/Cover crop.
- Navadhanya Seed Kits





Assumptions -

The ingredient estimations, the cost estimations and various other details have been furnished to the best of our knowledge but it will vary across geographies.

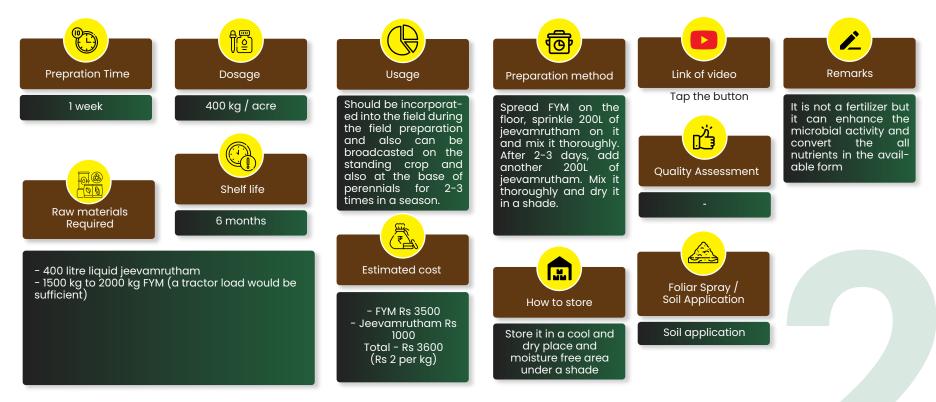
1. Ghana Jeevamrutham







2. Type II-Ghana Jeevamrutham

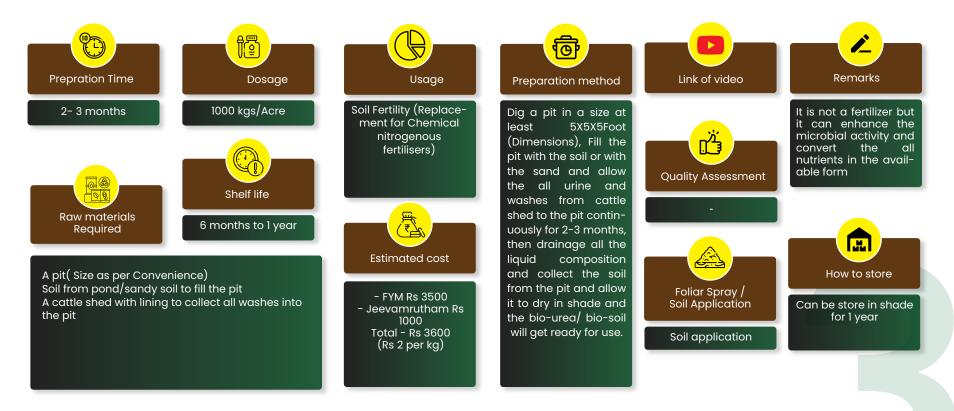






Bio-firtilizer

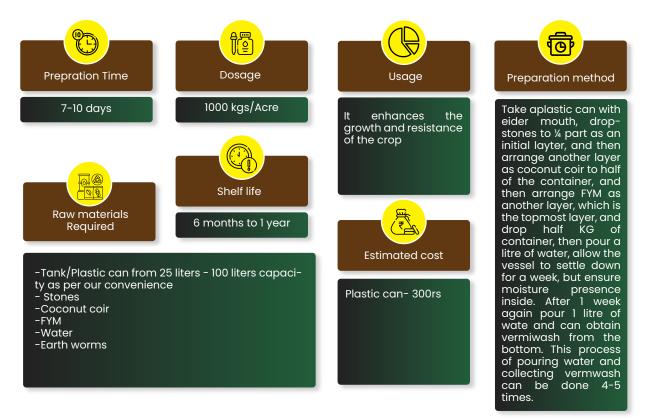
3. Bio-Urea/Bio-soil:







4. Vermiwash

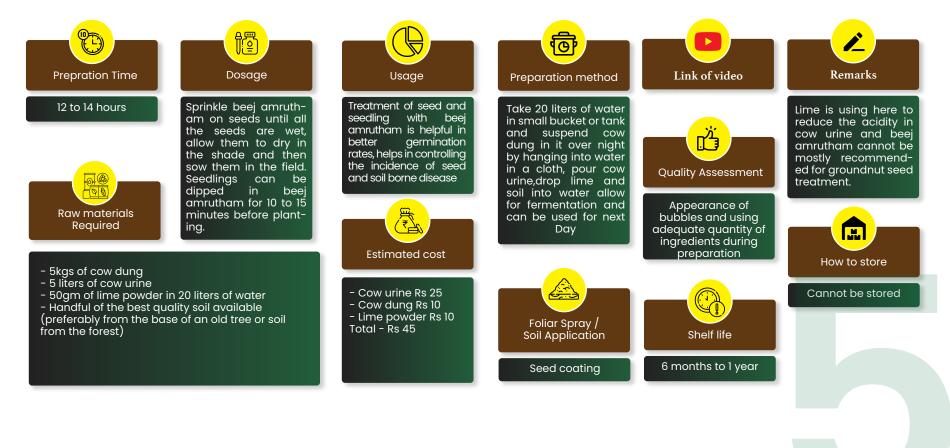








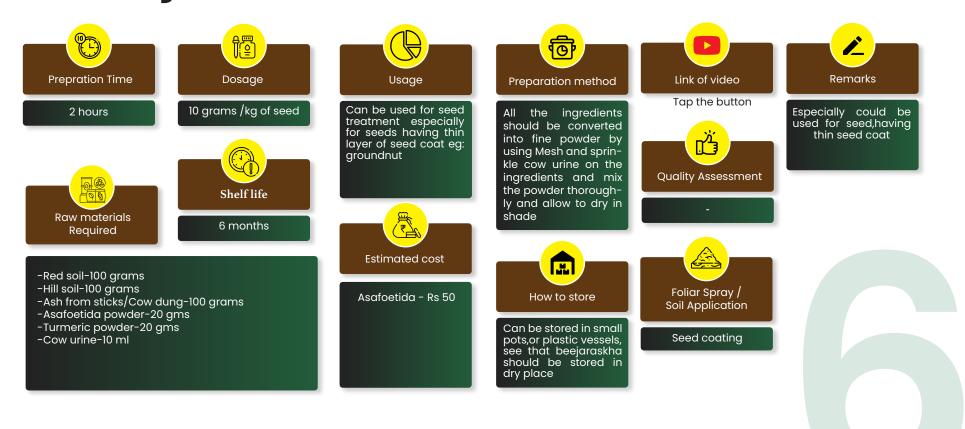
5. Beej Amrutham







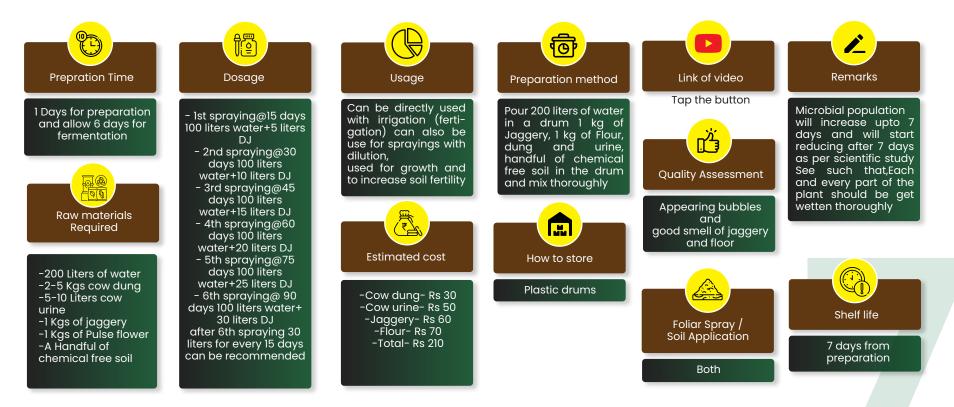
6. Beejaraksha







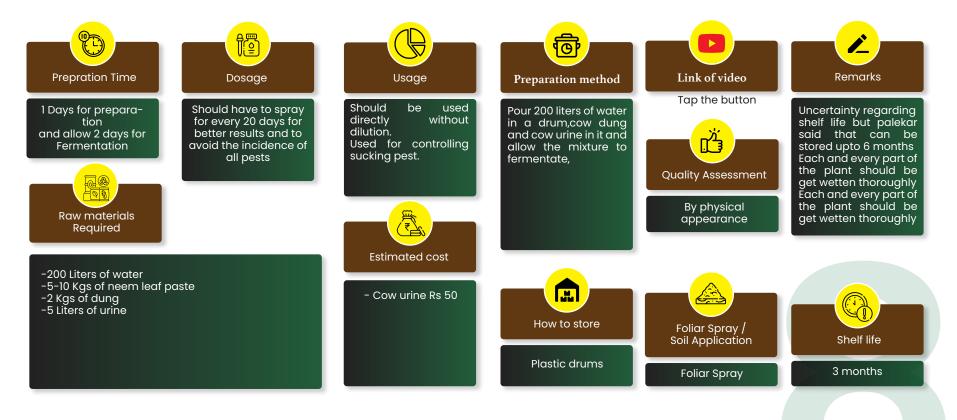
7. Jeevamrutha







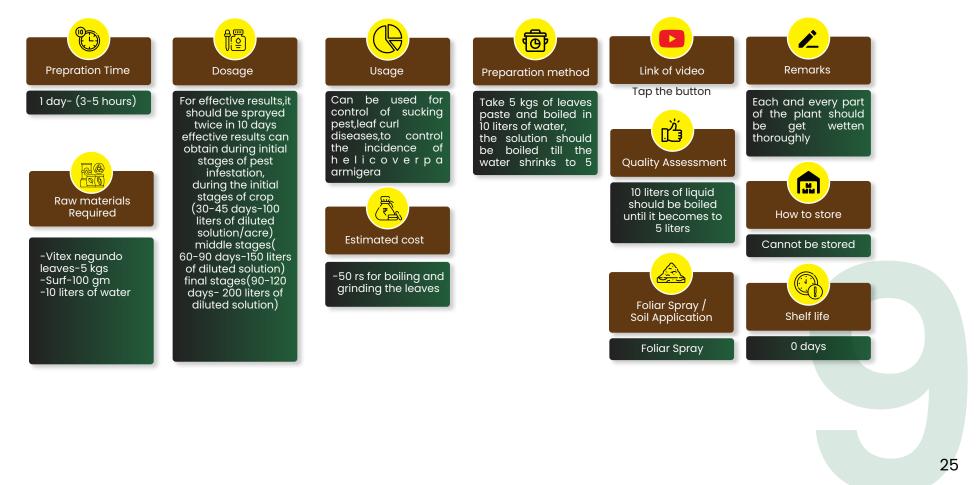
8. Neemastram







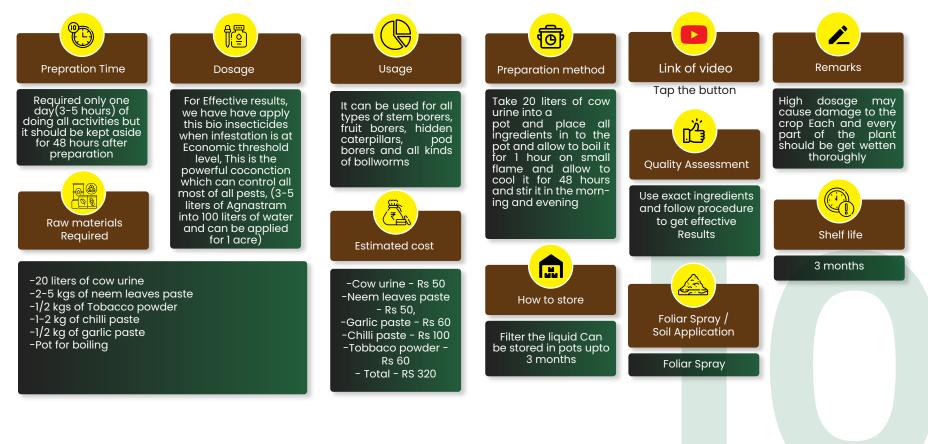
9. Vavilaku kashyam(vitex negundo solution)







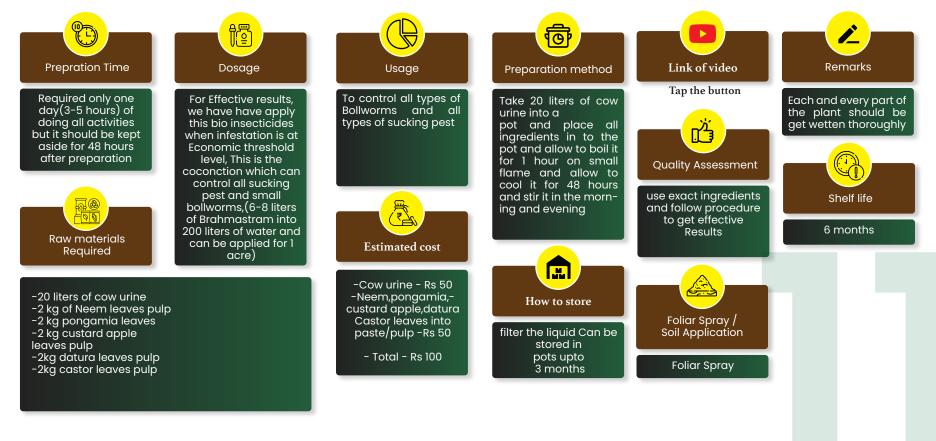
10. Agnastram





Bio-Pestisize

11. Brahmastram

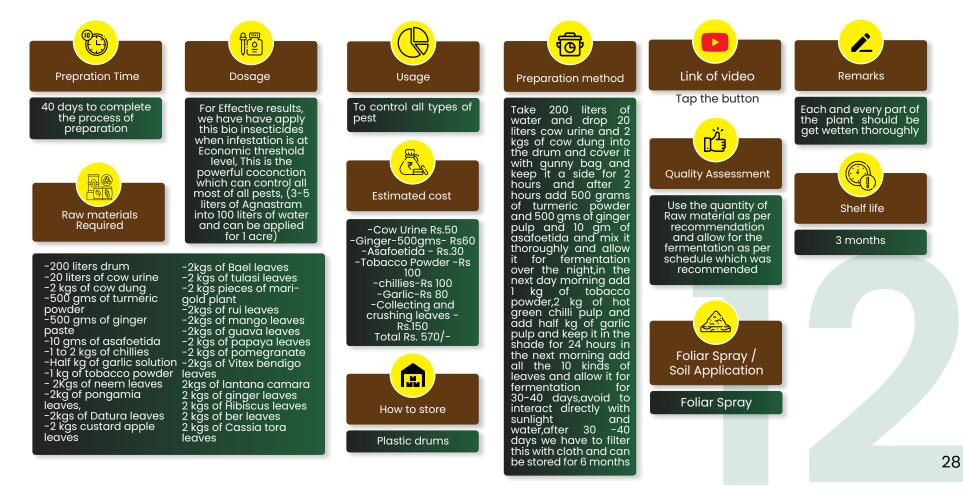








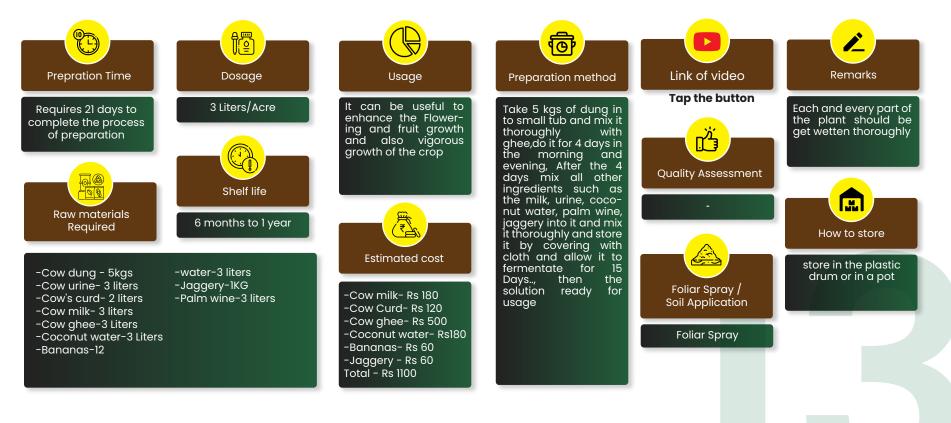
12. Dashparni kashayam







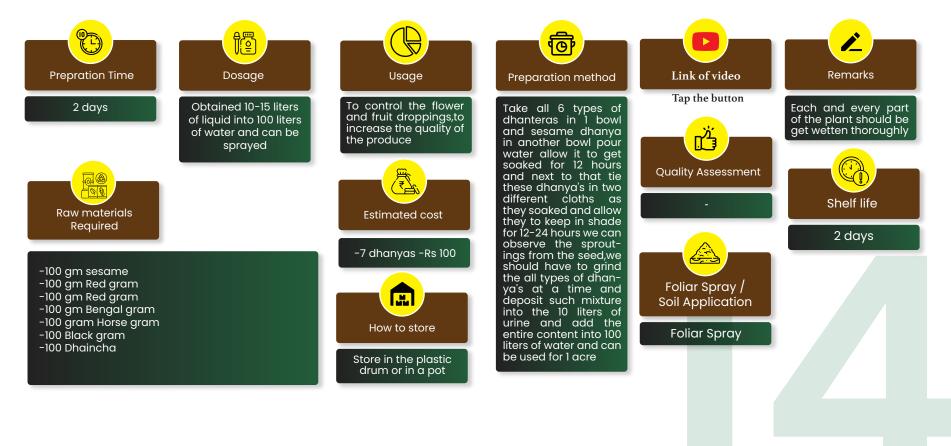
13. Panchagavya







14. Saptha Dhanyakura Kashayam:

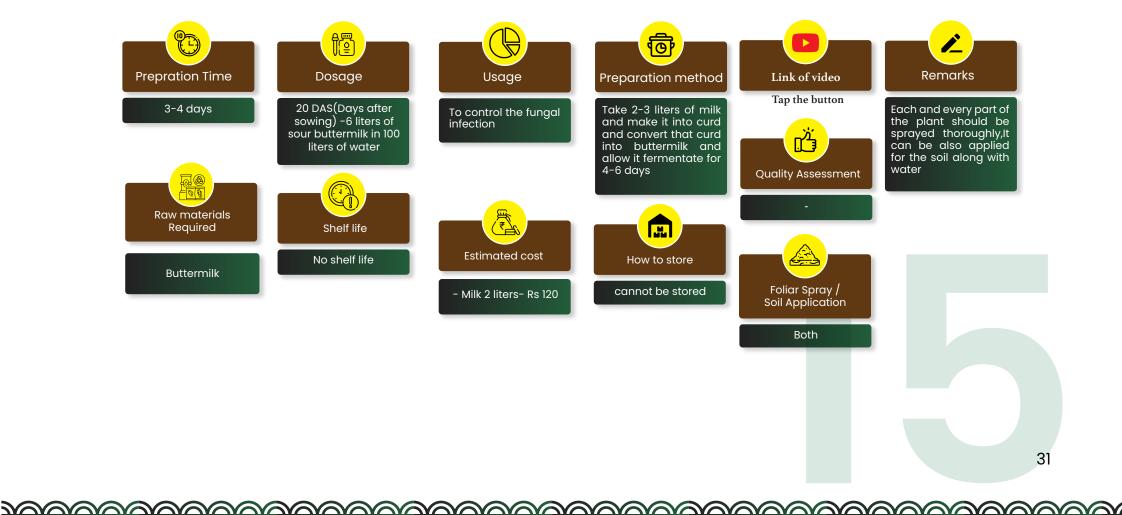








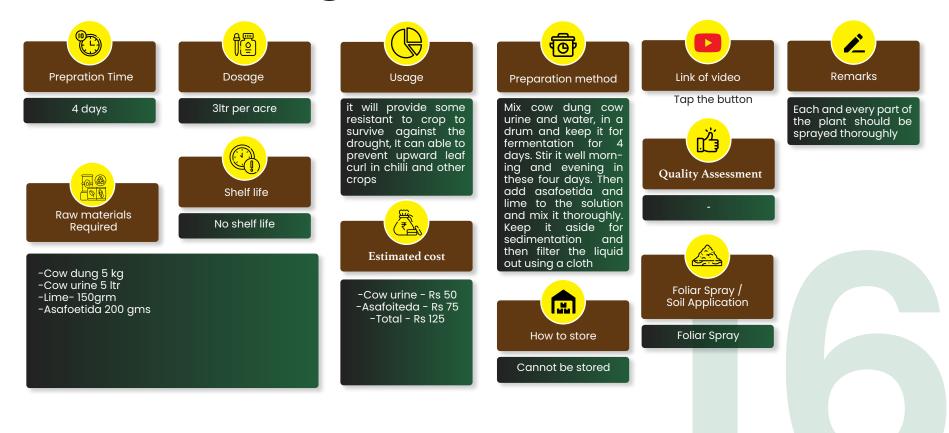
15.Sour Butter milk







16. Cow dung asafoetida solution

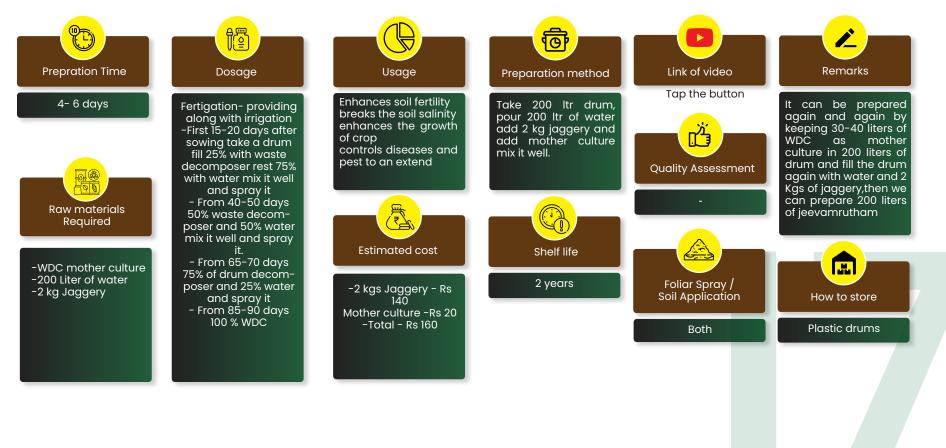






Bio-Pestisize

17. Waste decomposer

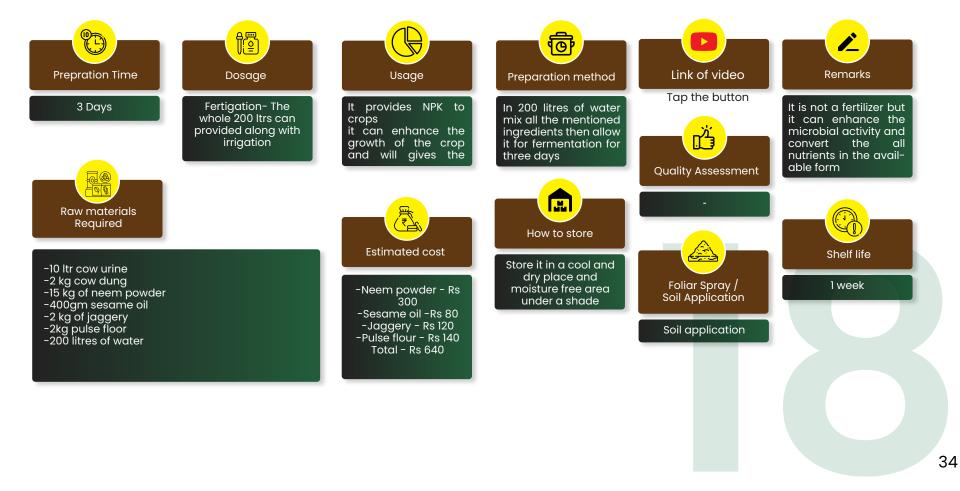




Botanicals



18.Amruthajalam:



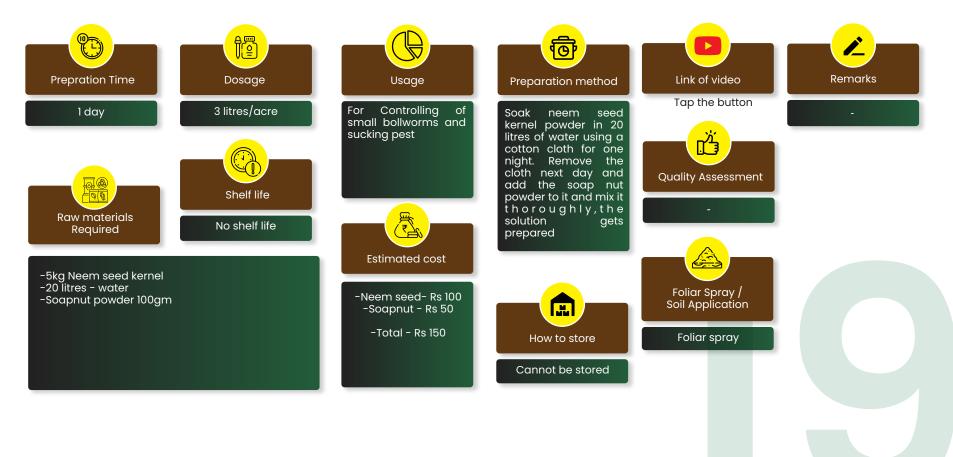






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19. Neem seed kernel Extract:

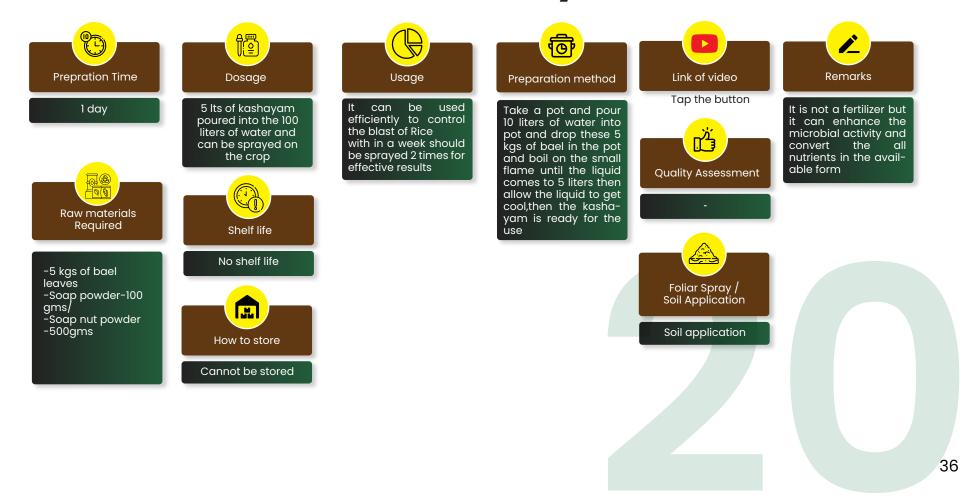








20.Bael Leaves kashayam





Botanicals



21.Onion kashayam:







Bio-Pestisize

22.Tobacco Kashayam

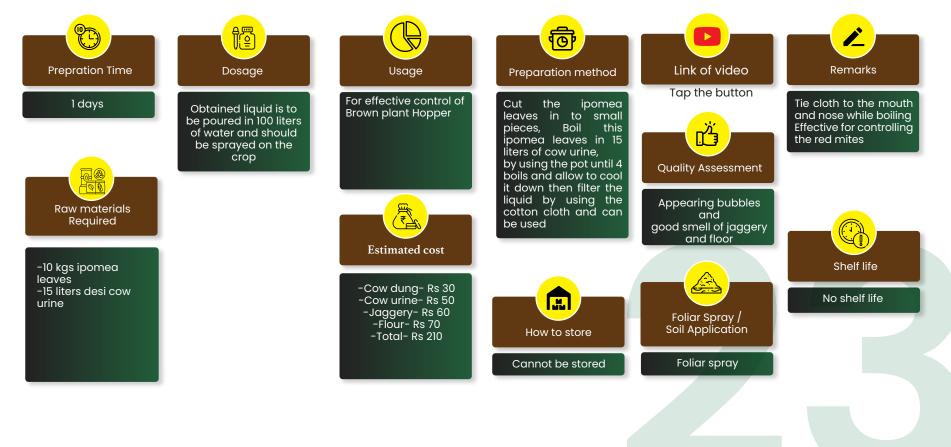






Bio-Pestisize

23.Thutikada Kashayam(ipomea solution)

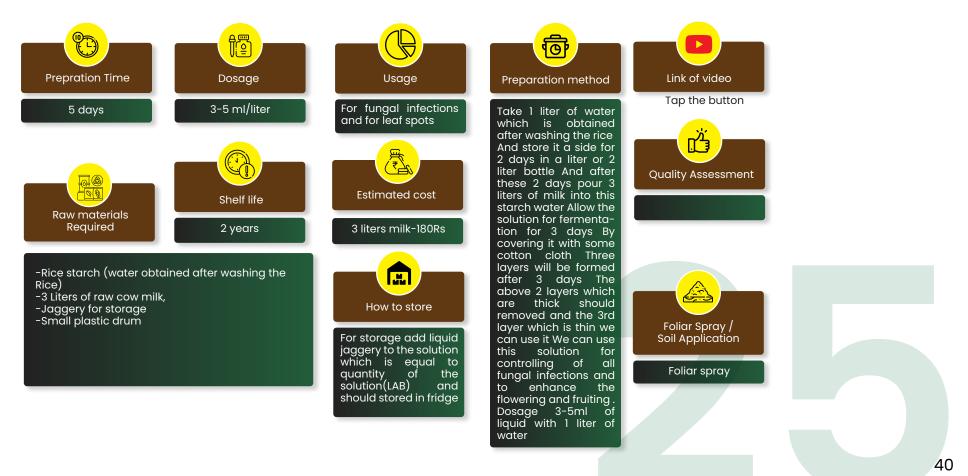








25.Green Chilli Garlic Solution

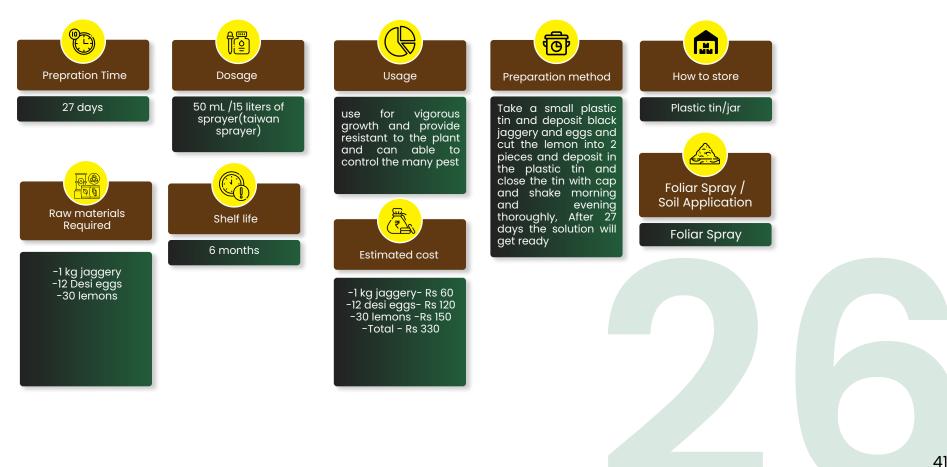






Bio-Pestisize

26.Egg amino acid

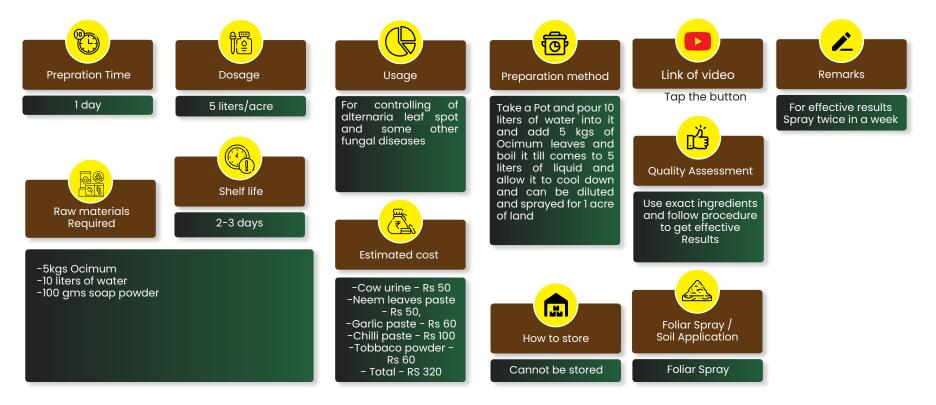








27.Ocimum kashayam

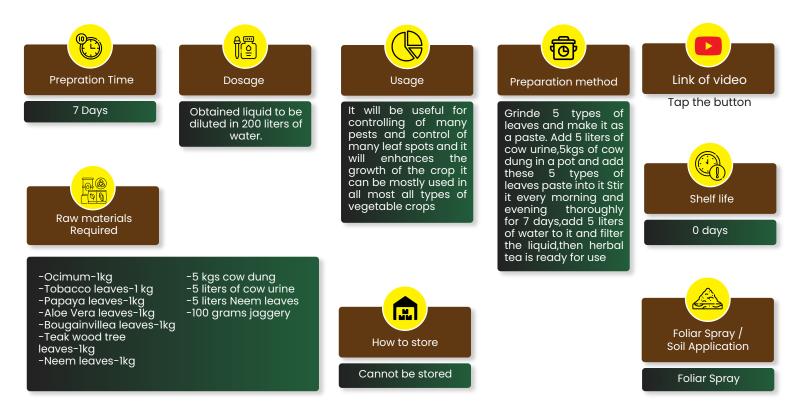




Botanicals



28.Herbal Tea

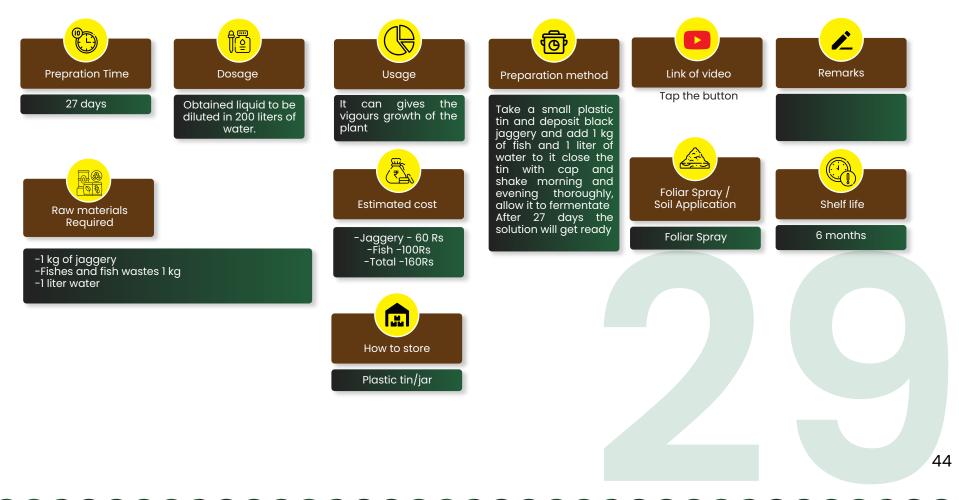




Botanicals

Bio-Pestisize

29.Fish Amino acid

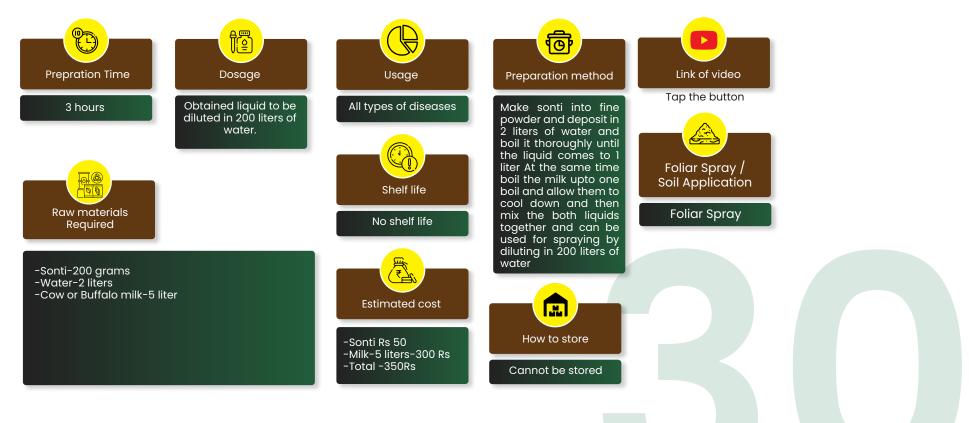








30.Dried ginger(Sonti/sonth)-milk Kashayam

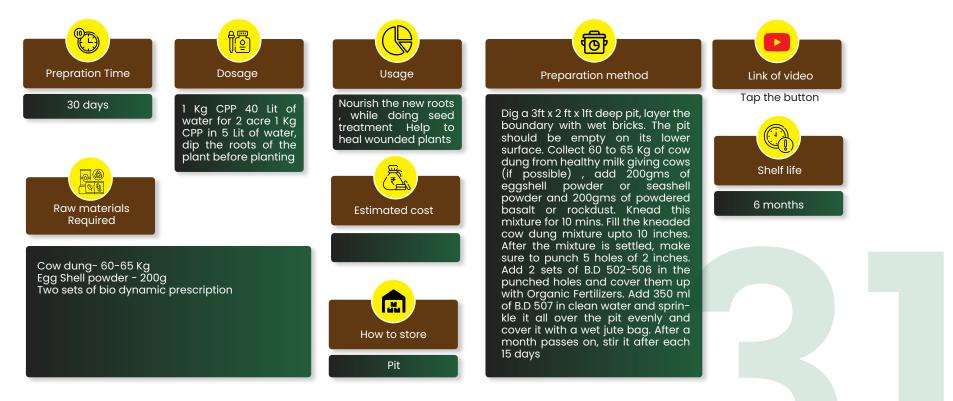






Bio-Pestisize

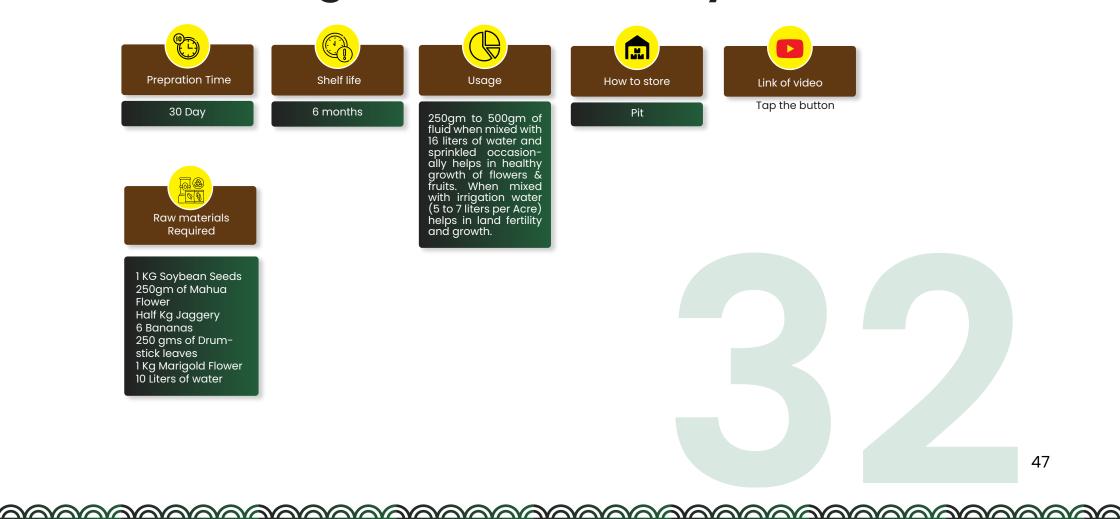
31. Cow Pat Pit (CPP)







32. Plant growth Factor Soyabean Tonic



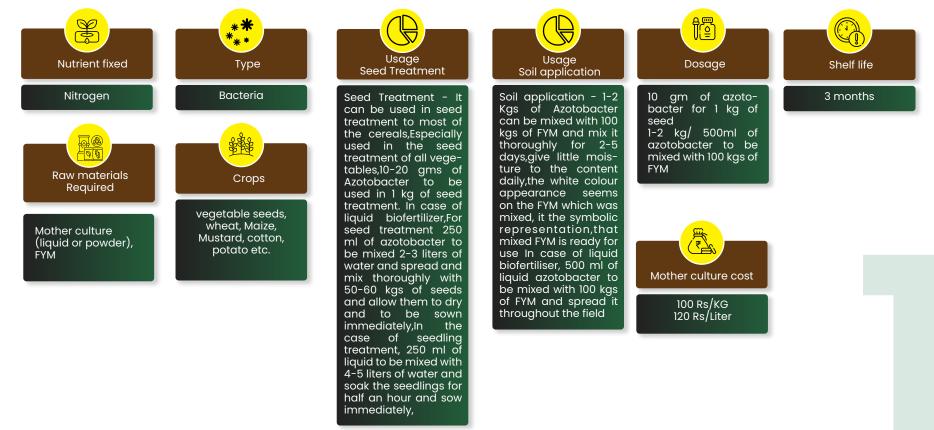
Non Botanicals

Nutrient Management | Multiplication Process





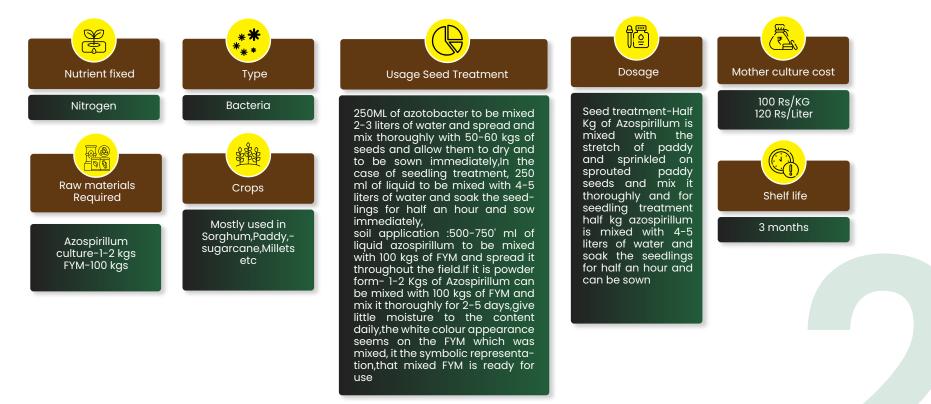
1. Azotobacter (Free Living)







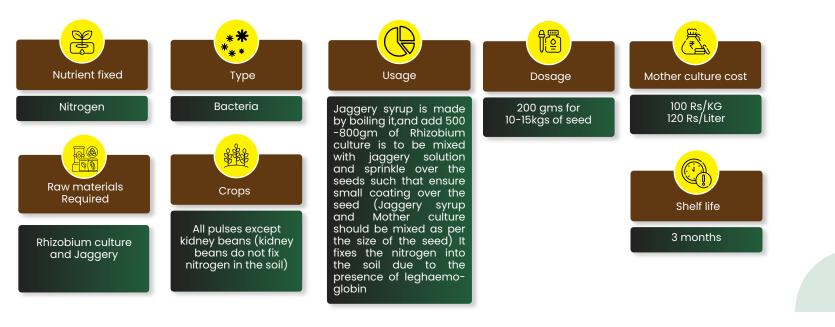
2. Azospirillum





Non Botanicals

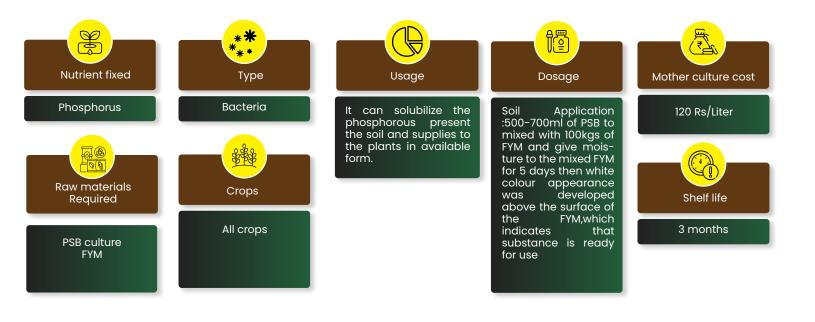
3. Rhizobium





Non Botanicals

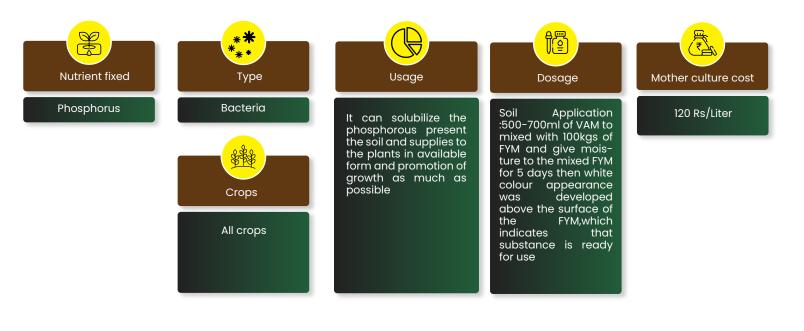
4. PSB (Phosphate solubilising Bacteria)



Non Botanicals



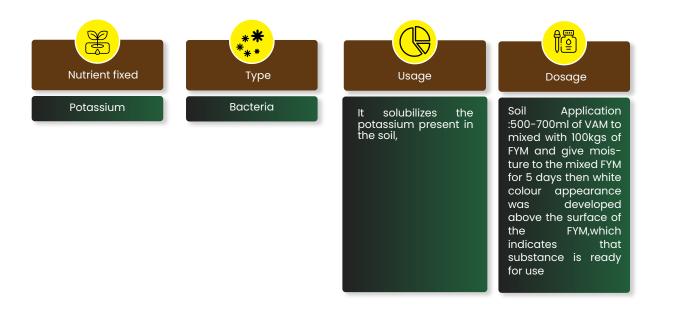
5. VAM (vesicular Arbuscular Mycorrhiza)





Non Botanicals

5. KSB (Pottsium solubilising bacteria)

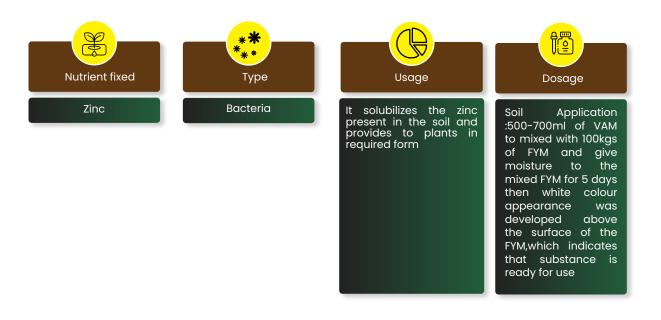






Non Botanicals

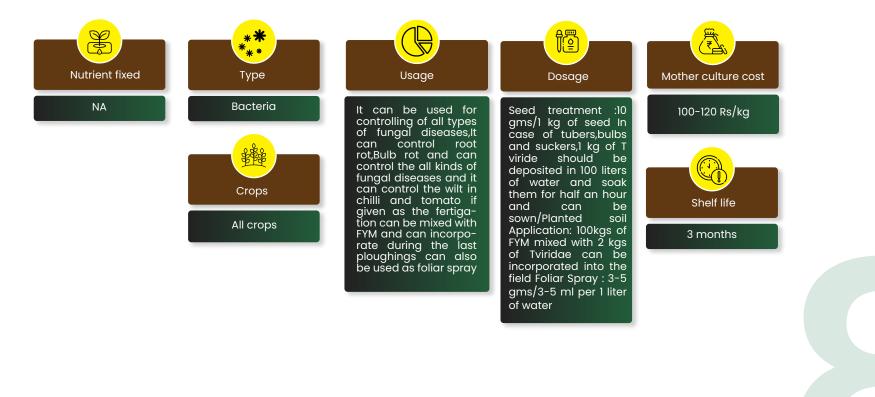
7. ZSB (Zinc solubilising Bacteria)





Non Botanicals

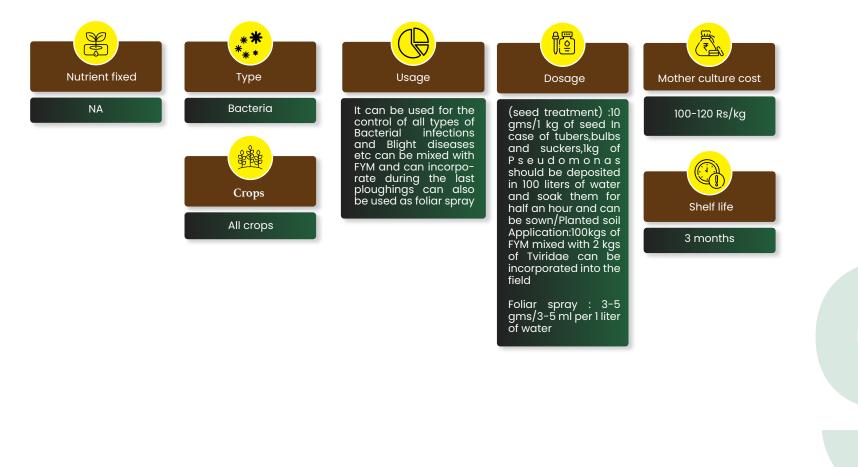
8. Trichoderma Viridae





Non Botanicals

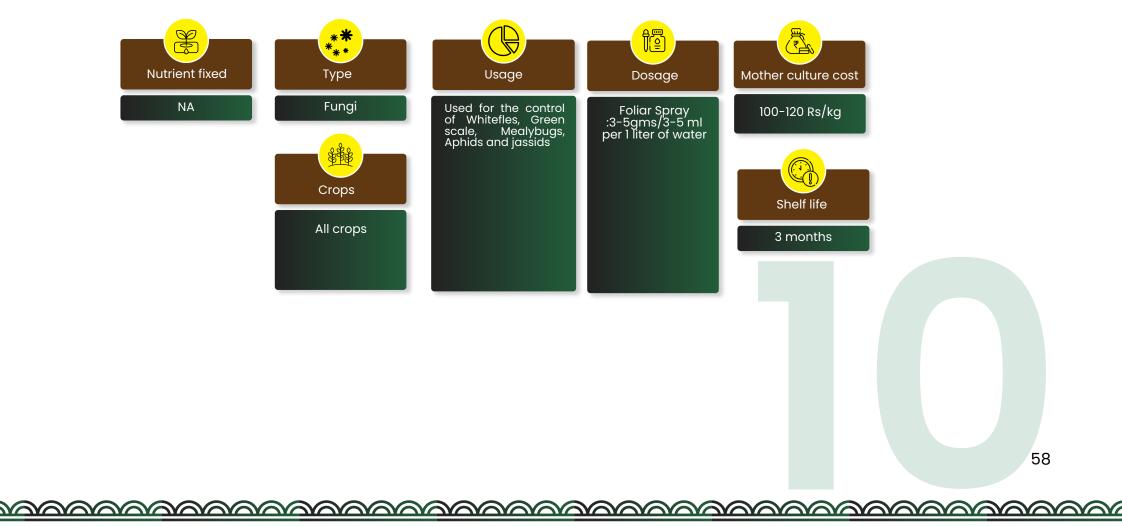
9. Pseudomonas





Non Botanicals

10. Verticillium Lecanii

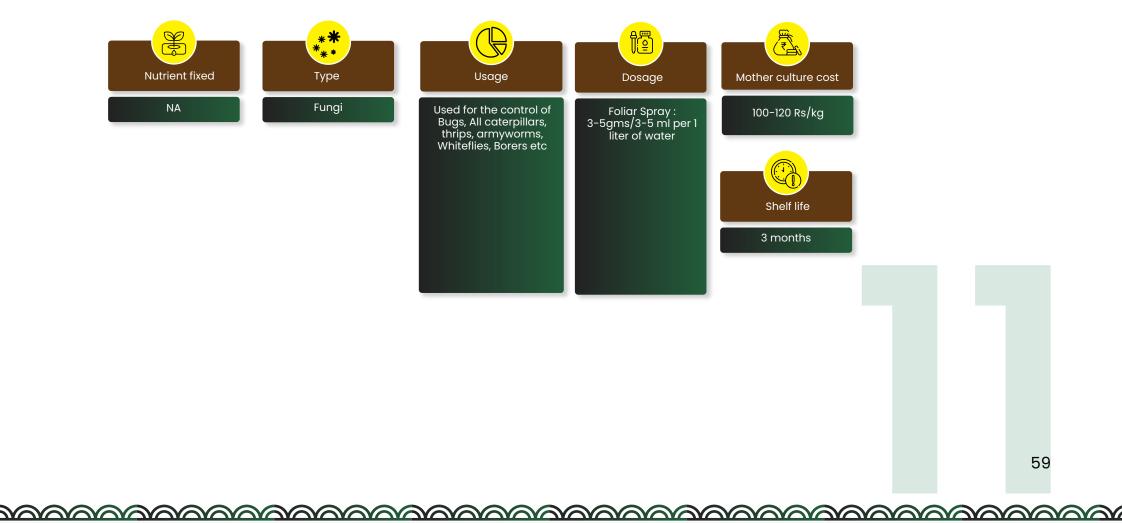




Non Botanicals

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11. Beauveria



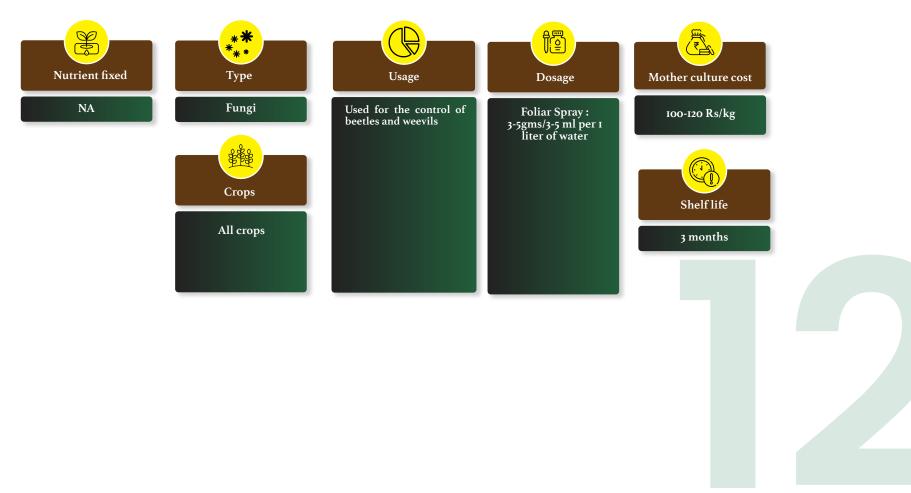




Non Botanicals

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12. Metarhizium

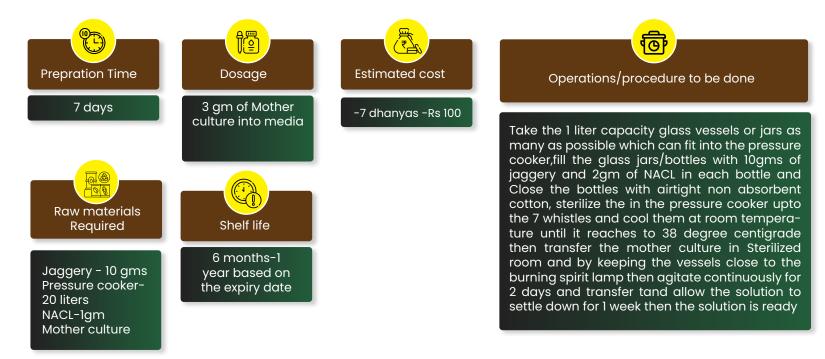




Multiplication Process

Bacteria - Method 1

(Azotobacter, Azospirillum, Pseudomonas, Rhizobium)

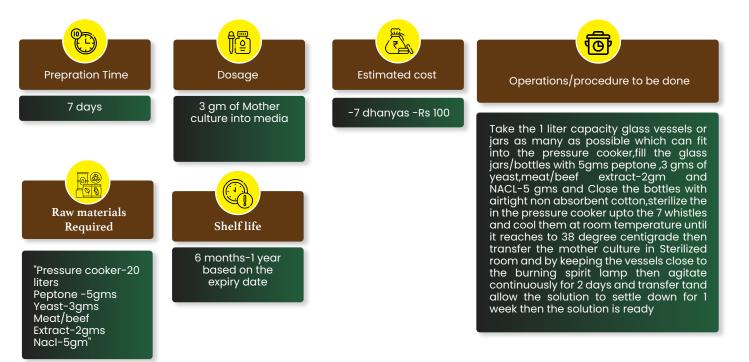




Multiplication Process

Bacteria - Method 2

(Azotobacter, Azospirillum, Pseudomonas, Rhizobium)

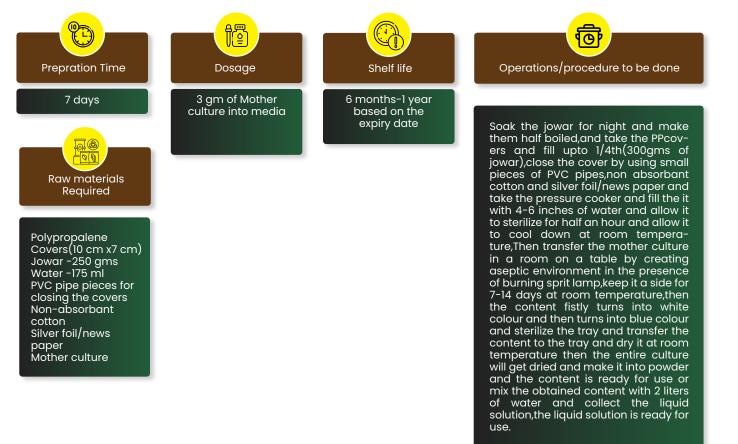




Multiplication Process

Fungi - Method 1

(Trichoderma viridae, Baeuveria, Verticillium lacani, Metarhizium)

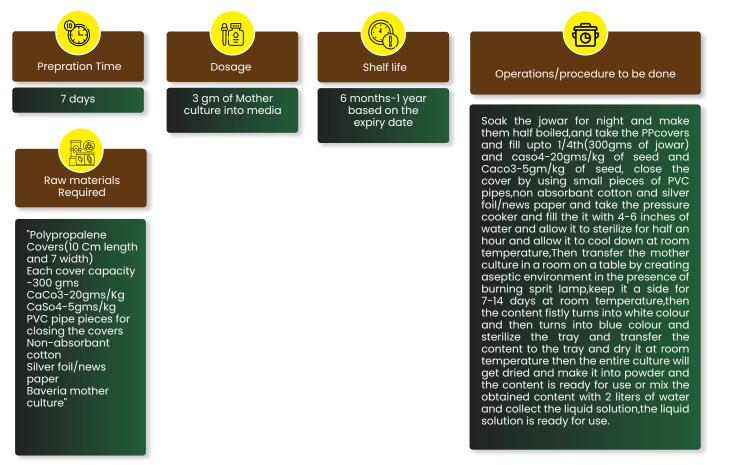




Multiplication Process

Fungi - Method 2

(Trichoderma viridae, Baeuveria, Verticillium lacani, Metarhizium)

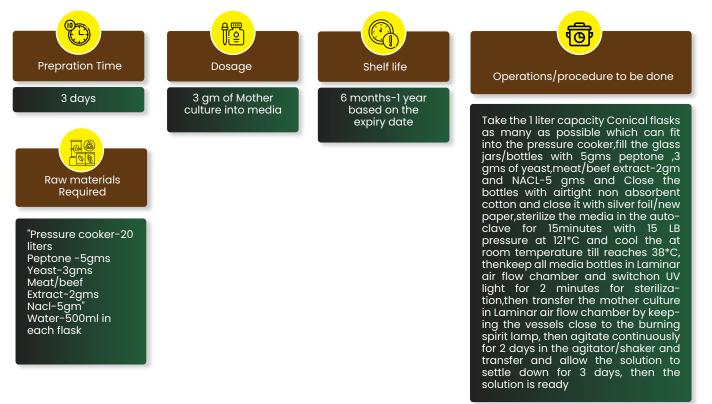




Multiplication Process

Bacteria Multiplication (Laboratory conditions)

(Azotobacter, Azospirillum, Pseudomonas, Rhizobium)



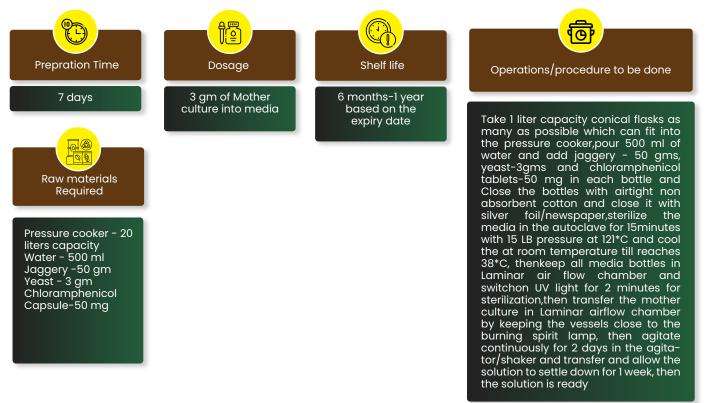




Multiplication Process

Fungi Multiplication (Laboratory conditions)

(Trichoderma viride, Beauveria, Verticillium lecanii, Metarhizium)





The National Coalition for Natural Farming is a collaborative platform to build knowledge and capacities in multiple dimensions among all stakeholders to accelerate the practice and policy related to agroecology-based farming in its multiple variants in India. The effort is to facilitate the empowerment of a significant number of small and marginal farmers covering a substantial area of land. With special emphasis on socially marginalized groups and regenerating environmentally vulnerable areas, with farmers' collectives as the foundational basis and women farmers in leadership roles.