

PRESS RELEASE

HEC-hit villagers trained on lemon cultivation as bio fence for mitigation

Guwahati, Feb 16 : Premier biodiversity conservation organisation Aaranyak and the British Asian Trust with the aim of capacitating local villagers affected by human elephant conflict (HEC) and supplementing their income to help them offset losses, if any, incurred due to HEC, conducted a training on Assam lemon cultivation and prevention of crop infestation in Konwarbam, Jeypore, of Dibrugarh district in Assam on February 12.

The training was conducted with support from Darwin Initiative in collaboration with the KVK, Dibrugarh, wherein their experts Sharmistha Borgohain and Sanghamitra Sarmah, imparted training to 38 villagers from three nearby villages, focusing mainly on Assam lemon.

Lemon plants act as a good bio fence, when cultivated in a particular pattern -- lemon plants should be planted in three rows, and in each row the plant should be in alternate position. This is a tried and tested tool to mitigate HEC and help generate additional income for the community by selling the lemons.

“We have partnered with the local villagers, and extended partial support to 15 beneficiaries with lemon saplings to initiate the bio fence, which will be maintained and monitored by the communities,” said conservation biologist Dr Alolika Sinha of Aaranyak.

During the training, the villagers received hands-on demonstration on the plantation process. Moreover, the trainees were also educated on the pest management, harvesting season and the market prospects in order to encourage them to augment their income. This training is a part of Aaranyak's and British Asian Trust's work on promoting human elephant coexistence in Assam and Meghalaya with support from Darwin Initiative.

The training programme began with a short deliberation on the importance of the training by Aaranyak's Bidisha Borah in presence of other senior officials of Aaranyak and the project team.

Aaranyak's Ejaj Ahmed, and Dhantu Gogoi facilitated the event along with the village champion Rajib Chetia. Pre and post evaluations to understand the knowledge gained by the trainees was conducted through a questionnaire.

***Press statement issued by Bijay Sankar Bora, Publicity Secretary, Aaranyak.
Contact No. 8638229722, Email ID: bijaysankar@aaranyak.org***