**Appreciation Award**

**Edavarembil Gold- Improved Nutmeg Variety**

E. V. Thomas
Idukki, Kerala
Scout: PDS

Thomas (58) has an experience of over four decades in the cultivation of clove, black pepper and nutmeg using traditional methods learnt from his forefathers. He completed his education up to 8th standard but has been keenly interested in nursery establishment for propagating, regenerating and disseminating traditional cultivars of spice crops. He has developed a nutmeg variety Edavarembil Gold famous for good quality nuts.

After losing his nutmeg orchard to some unknown disease in late 1980s, he collected seeds and grafting materials of traditional nutmeg varieties from wild and propagated the plants by seeds and grafting using wild nutmeg rootstalks. In 1999, he developed fresh nutmeg plants and among the newly developed plants, he noticed four-five plants, which had lateral growth pattern of the branches. Owing to the peculiar growth pattern, which facilitated easy harvesting of fruits, he started clonal propagation from one of the lateral branching plant through grafting and continued for two generations. By 2004 he found that desired character was stabilized and named the variety as Edavarembil Gold. Presently, he has 50 fruit bearing trees of the variety, 20 of which are 15 years old. The variety produces more fruits per plant (200kg/annum in 10-years old plant) with good shelf life (5 days) of raw fruits. It is also suitable for the cultivation in shady areas like in cardamom estates. The variety produces high quality bold nuts and dark red mace; nut contains higher essential oil content (13-15 %).

Facilitated by NIF-India, the biochemical profiling and quality analysis of the variety were carried out at Indian Institute of Spices Research, Kozhikode. The report showed that the variety has superior quality nuts with highest oil (13.3%), total phenol (20.7 mg GAE/g) and Alpha-limonene (9.84 %) content as compared to all the checks. The variety is being cultivated in about two acres of land in Idukki district.