

Ernakulam KVK of ICAR-CMFRI releases grass carp fish to clear aquatic weeds



Kochi: In an eco-friendly move to clear aquatic weeds, the Ernakulam Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK) of ICAR-Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI), Kochi released juveniles of grass carp, a freshwater fish that eats aquatic plants, into Kadupadam Chira, Mookkannur in Angamaly. A joint mission to rejuvenate the waterbody with the support of Kadupadam Chira Samrakshana Samithi and Matsya Club, the fish-ranching was part of the

Central government's Swachh Bharat campaign.

Grass carp fish (*Ctenopharyngodon idella*) had been successfully used in the past too by the KVK to tackle the weed menace in the district. The KVK, functioning under the CMFRI, stepped in to grow these fish in ponds as the waterbodies continue to be fast-infested with weeds even after repeated manual clearing.

According to the KVK, as many as 20 grass carps are enough to clear a one-acre-sized water resource infested with weeds. "This fish consumes aquatic plants up to two or three times its total body weight on average. Since it does not breed, there is no chance for the proliferation of the fish in the pond," said Dr. Shinoj Subramannian, Head of the Ernakulam Krishi Vigyan Kendra.

"Excessive growth of aquatic weeds causes choking water resources and is posing threat to the freshwater ecosystem, leaving many of the ponds on the verge of deterioration. The menace is mostly seen in stagnant water resources. Though there are around 140 varieties of aquatic weeds available, species such as salvinia, hydrilla and pistia are the most abundant and harmful in freshwater resources. Growing grass carp is an eco-friendly solution to clear out the weeds instead of using chemical compounds which are expensive and harmful to fishes and the aquatic ecosystem," he added.