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A model for waste management

J. Malarvizhi



USEFUL WASTE: S. Indrakumar, a Pammal resident shows the earthworms he uses for vermicomposting the organic waste in his house. — PHOTO: A. Muralitharan

CHENNAI : Gardens can generate their own fertilisers with minimal expense and effort, says S. Indrakumar, a Pammal resident, whose house is an example of complete waste management and rainwater harvesting.

Pammal is a `zero-waste' suburb, a status achieved thanks to co-ordinated efforts of the local body and the Exnora Club here. Garbage is my business now, says the former employee of English Electric (now Areva).

For this enterprising resident, the compost created in his small garden and earthworms he sells to those wanting to make their fertilisers are a steady source of income. His house is a model for waste management that frequently hosts students and visitors who would like to emulate it.

Two cement rings, stacked on top of each other, or a mud pot, can be used to collect organic waste, he says. They would have to be placed in a shaded spot where sunlight or rainwater cannot enter the container.

Leaves and kitchen waste covered with a thin layer of dry cow dung or garden soil with earthworms would become usable manure in little more than a month. For a larger garden, shallow tanks not more than a feet and a half high, can be constructed for the waste. One of the tanks in his garden is filled with waste and another with dry, crumbly vermicompost. No flies or stench around here.

Earthworms are required for the process and he breeds them separately, selling them to people who want to start making their own fertiliser.

The greenery in the rooftop garden rivals the greenery in the small garden outside his house.

Medicinal, ornamental and fragrant plants grow in various containers, some of which are put together from waste products, and contribute their leaves to the manufacture of vermicompost.

Mr. Indrakumar can be contacted at 11, 6th Street, Sankara Nagar, Pammal.

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