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A GREEN REVOLUTION IN AN INDUSTRIAL BELT

No Garden-Variety This: Many Industrialists Now Aam Aadmi

Reliance, Essar and Sanghi groups growing mango on barren land surrounding Kutch plants

MITUL THAKKAR & MADHVI SALLY
NEW DELHI

Big industrial projects are often blamed for taking land, water and labour away from agriculture, but in Gujarat, some big industrialists have done the opposite — turned acres of barren land into mango orchards.

Reliance Industries, Essar Group and Sanghi Industries, which are better known for their largest single-location refineries and cement plant, are also among the country's leading mango producers.

It's not just that they opted for mango plantation instead of low-maintenance trees to meet their commitment for creating a green belt around their plants, but they are constantly working on innovative practices to improve productivity and quality. In fact, mangoes from some of the largest industrial houses' orchards are organic.

Reliance Industries, which grows 127 varieties of mango in a 600-acre green belt at its

Jamnagar refinery complex, looks to beat Israel and Brazil in productivity, a top company official said. These countries produce 8-10 tonnes of mango per acre against India's average of 3-4 tonnes.

Reliance has named its mango orchard Dhirubhai Ambani Lakhbag Amrayee after a mango grove Mughal Emperor Akbar created in the 16th century. Akbar had planted 1 lakh mango trees in the estate he called Lakhbag at Darbhanga in Bihar; the

Ambani Lakhbag has more than 1,38,000 trees.

Parimal Nathwani, group president (corporate affairs) at Reliance Industries, says the company's Jamnagar mango will herald a revolution in Indian horticulture.

Reliance encourages farmers to visit its orchard and learn from its innovative

practices. It also distributes 1 lakh free saplings to farmers every year, says Nathwani, who was a close confidant of Dhirubhai Ambani.

The Ruias of Essar Group, meanwhile, produced 80 tonnes of mango last season compared with less than seven tonnes in 2009. The group plans to plant 12,000 more trees over 60 acres of additional land surrounding its Vadinar refinery in Jamnagar. A company spokesperson said Essar Agrotech has applied for Global GAP certification for exports.

What is noteworthy is that these firms have their orchards in not-so-friendly areas. Alok Sanghi of Sanghi Industries, which operates one of the world's largest single-stream cement plants in Kutch district, says the group decided to create a mango orchard to showcase that even sweet mango can be grown in an arid region like coastal Kutch.

A Strategic Role ►► 3

Sweet Success

Reliance Industries
Location: **Jamnagar**

 **1,38,000** **600**
No. of Trees Acre

MARKETING: Exporter; Rel Lifescience markets mango pulp under 'Rellure' brand

Essar Group | **Vadinar**
93,000 **80**
No. of Trees Tonnes

PLANS:
Preparing 60 acres more for 12K additional mango plants

MARKETING:
Has applied for Global GAP certification

Sanghi Ind | **Kutch**
3,000 **80**
No. of Trees Acre
Production Per Year **12-13** Tonnes

