

New tech to utilise coir fibre waste with latex

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A new manufacturing facility will be set up to produce coir-rubber composite pots from coir fibre waste.

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Disposal of harmful coir fibre waste produced by industrial units that extract and use coir fibre has been a serious environmental issue in the State.

Not any longer!

The National Institute for Interdisciplinary Science and Technology (NIIST)-Thiruvananthapuram, a constituent laboratory under Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), and Sevashram, an NGO-based in Angamaly, Ernakulam, have shared their expertise to find a solution.

JOINT VENTURE

These two would jointly set up a manufacturing facility to produce coir-rubber composite (CRC) pots from coir fibre waste, a spokesman for CSIR-NIIST said here.

Sevashram is a registered charitable society, which creates employment opportunities that caters to socially and economically backward entrepreneurs.

Using the process know-how developed by CSIR-NIIST, coir fibre waste is bonded by natural rubber latex (NRL) and formed into 'continuous sheets' which could be used for the production of garden pots, rigid/flexible panels, or floor tiles.

CUSTOMISING OPTIONS

Besides obvious attributes of eco-friendliness and bio-degradability, some of their unique selling propositions are their light weight, durability (non-breakability), resistance to weather, and lower cost compared to clay pots of similar capacity.

These containers could also be produced in aesthetically appealing designs, shapes and colours according to customer requirements and for in-door and out-door applications.

In the long run, the coir sheets could also be used as 'reinforcing plies' for composite products such as rubber floor tiles, laminates and rigid composites as partition boards.

Conventional garden pots are mostly clay-based. With the present growing trend of horticulture and kitchen-gardens in both rural and urban areas, there would be high demand for coir pots, the spokesman said.

The joint venture aims at creating 'wealth from waste' and mitigating environmental problems caused by coir fibre waste to the extent possible, apart from generating employment in the rural sector.

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