

Frequently asked question (FAQs) on Indoor Saffron Cultivation

Q-1: What is Saffron production in World and India?

Saffron has a very large market potential; the world production of Saffron is about 300 MT per Annum. Iran is the largest producer of Saffron in the world with contribution of about 90%, India is the second largest producer of Saffron with a production of about 21 MT per Annum which makes a contribution of 7% in worlds production.

Q-2: What is Saffron Market in India?

India has a demand of about 70 MT, while supply from Kashmir is only 20 MT, thus there is a gap of about 50 MT. There is a very large demand vs supply gap in India. For the purpose to fulfil this gap, Govt. of India is importing Saffron from Iran. This ever widening demand vs supply gap in India provides a very large market potential in the country.

Q-3: Can saffron be grown outside Kashmir also?

Can Saffron be grown outside Kashmir also, the answer to this question is YES. Outside Kashmir Saffron can be grown very easily inside a closed room called greenhouse through a technique called Aeroponics.

Q-4: What is Aeroponics and How does it work for Saffron growing?

Through this technique a climate replica of climate of Kashmir is created artificially inside a closed room called Greenhouse. It is a soil-less technique. Three climatic parameters i.e. Temperature, Humidity & light is maintained and regulated with parametric values similar to that in Kashmir, sufficient airflow is created and maintained inside the Greenhouse. The saffron bulbs (seeds) are brought from Kasmir and loaded inside the Greenhouse using wooden trays. The wooden trays are placed on multilevel vertical slotted angle trays. Through the artificially created climatic paraments with sufficient humidity and airflow, the bulbs germinate and further grow to give saffron flowers.

Q-5: What is the growing cycle of saffron in a year?

Saffron seeds are placed inside the greenhouse in the month of Mid. August. Through maintaining the required climatic parameters inside the greenhouse, the saffron bulbs start giving flowers from mid. October and the process of flowering and harvesting of Saffron gets completed by end November. In this way the growing and Harvesting process lasts for 4 months maximum i.e. from August to November.

In the month starting December, the saffron bulbs are transplanted to soil where they get multiplied in next eight months. By the end of July new bulbs are ready to dig-out from soil and place them in the greenhouse for next cycle of germination.

Q-6: Is indoor saffron cultivation a profitable business?

Indoor saffron cultivation is a slightly long-term business. The real profitability comes in the third year and after that it becomes highly profitable. It is necessary to have patience for 2 years. The very first year we shall require 100% of the seeds required for farming. The second year onwards your

seeds will start getting multiplying, your buying of seeds is likely to reduce considerably. In the third year your own seeds shall get ready to deliver flowers, your buying of seeds will go zero. From here you will start earning profits. In the fourth year your through seeds multiplication process, you will have a large quantities of seeds in surplus, you can sell the seeds also and convert them to profits. From here your profitability will go very high.

Q-7: Is there some way to make this business profitable in the first year itself?

Yes, the Saffron business can be made profitable from the very first year itself. As said earlier the growing and harvesting cycle for saffron starts in mid. August and completes by end November. The next eight months the same facility (greenhouse) can be used for growing Mushrooms. The joint business of Saffron and Mushrooms becomes profitable from the very first year.

Q-8: What is the investment required for Indoor Saffron Cultivation?

With a room size of 100 to 120 SF, it requires around 4.00 lacs of set-up cost and additional 2.0 to 2.5 lacs of seed cost. In such way a total of 6.00 to 6.5 lacs of investment shall be required.

If the room size doubles then the set-up cost will not double, it will be around 1.6 times of room size of 100 SF. Means for a 200 SF of room, the set-up cost may be around 6.5 lacs, seeds cost can go up-to 3.5 to 4.0 lacs.

For first year you may go with smaller size rooms for learning and to gain the confidence. To make this business real profitable, it is advisable after first year to switchover to bigger size of room i.e. 500 or 1000 or 2000 SF.

Q-9: Is there any risk involved in Indoor Saffron Business?

Yes, as any and every business has certain risk involved, the same way this business also have a few risk factors. The very first risk is the quality of seeds. If you get all the seeds with good quality with proper size in weight, your crop yield and quality shall be up-to the mark. Your business shall be at risk if you get seeds with some disease or dead seeds. The second risk is consistency in electrical power supply. If you electrical power is inconsistency and not reliable then your quality and yield of produce shall get affected adversely. There is no other risk involved in this business.