

Programme Schedule

10th Wayanad Community Seed Fest 2026

Feb 28 to March 1, 2026

Agrobiodiversity forms the foundation of resilient farming systems, cultural identity, and community stewardship over seeds and natural resources. Indigenous crop varieties, evolved and conserved over generations, embody farmers' knowledge, ecological adaptation, and collective heritage. However, these living repositories of diversity face increasing pressures from homogenized agriculture, market-driven crop choices, erosion of traditional knowledge systems, and changing socio-ecological contexts.

The Wayanad Community Seed Fest (WCSF) is a unique grassroots initiative that envisions the continuity of on-farm agrobiodiversity conservation through community networks, seed exchange, and knowledge-sharing partnerships. Initiated in 2015, WCSF has grown into an annual platform that brings together custodian farmers, tribal communities, researchers, policymakers, and the wider public to celebrate, protect, and promote indigenous seeds and farmers' rights.

The 10th Wayanad Community Seed Fest 2026 (WCSF 2026) is being held from **28 February to 1 March 2026 at Athikkolli Seed Village, Vellamunda Panchayath, Mananthavady, Wayanad**. This milestone edition marks a significant transition, with the Seed Fest being organized under enhanced community ownership and leadership, with active participation of the Wayanad District Tribal Development Action Council (WDTDAC) and rural and tribal farming communities. By hosting the Seed Fest in a community seed village, WCSF 2026 aims to celebrate diversity in its own landscape and strengthen community rights and responsibilities over seeds, farming systems, and seed sovereignty.

Aligned with the **UN International Year of the Woman Farmer (IYWF 2026)**, the theme of WCSF 2026 is **“Celebrating Women Farmers as Custodians of Agrobiodiversity”**, *celebrating agrobiodiversity and recognising women in agriculture as conservators and agri-entrepreneurs*.

The technical sessions of WCSF 2026 will focus on **women's role in agrobiodiversity conservation, women-led agrobiodiversity enterprises; reviving pepper cultivation in Wayanad and the practical challenges and future pathways for community seed systems, including policy perspectives related to farmers' rights on seeds**.

A key highlight of the Seed Fest will be the signature Seed Exchange Programme, enabling the sharing and continuity of indigenous crop varieties for on-farm conservation. The Seed Fest will also feature exhibitions showcasing the rich agrobiodiversity of Wayanad and interactive sessions that make the programme educative and engaging for farmers, students, researchers, and the general public.

Day 1: Saturday, 28th Feb 2026
Registration: 09:00 am to 10:00 am

10:30 -12:30	Session 1: Inaugural Ceremony Session coordinator: C S Dhanya	
	Inauguration of Seed Fest 2026 by lighting the traditional lamp by the chief guests and the elderly farmer representatives	
10:30 – 10:40	Welcome address	Smt Latha , President, Wayanad District Tribal Development Action Council (WDTDAC)
	Opening Remarks	Dr Niraj U Joshi , Director, CAaC-MSSRF
10:40 – 10:50	Presidential Address	Smt. Chandrika Krishnan President, District Panchayath, Wayanad
10:50 – 11:00	Inaugural Address	Sri O R Kelu Minister for Welfare of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Backward Classes and Devaswoms of Kerala
11:00 – 11:10	Keynote Address	Dr Jiju P Alex Member, Kerala State Planning Board, Trustee, MSSRF
11:10 – 11:15	Special Address	Dr Rengalakshmi R. Executive Director, MSSRF
11:15 – 11:20	Special Address	Dr A Sabu Member Secretary, Kerala State Council for Science Technology and Environment
11:20 – 11:25	Special Address	Dr V Balakrishnan , Member Secretary, Kerala State Biodiversity Board
11:25 – 11:30	Special Address	Dr C Thamban Principal Scientist (Retd) ICAR-CPCRI, Senior Fellow, MSSRF
11:30 – 11:40	Announcement of Community Genome Savior Awards by Wayanad District Tribal Development Action Council (WDTDAC) : P C Balan, WDTDAC	
	Community Genome Savior Award -1	presented by
	Community Genome Savior Award -2	Sri O R Kelu Minister for Welfare of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Backward Classes and Devaswoms of Kerala
	Felicitations	
11:40 – 12:30	Smt. Kamarlaila , President, Vellamunda Grama Panchayath	
	Smt Salma Moyi , Chairperson, District Panchayath Health and Education Standing Committee	
	Sri Muhammad Unais O T , Member Block Panchayath, Mananthavady	
	Smt Lathika M , Vice-president, Vellamunda Grama Panchayath	
	Dr Karuthamani , DDE, RCRS, Chundale	
	Sri Jayachandran , District Coordinator, Kudumbasree Mission	
	Sri Suresh A R. , Project Director, ATMA Wayanad	
	Smt Shimna , Member, Vellamunda Grama Panchayath	
	Dr NS Pradeep , KSCSTE-MBGIPS	

	Smt Sakina Kuduva , C D S Chairperson, Vellamunda	
	Sri Sudhakaran , Member, Vellamunda Grama Panchayath	
	Presence – Vellamunda Grama Panchayath Ward members and Members of Athikkolli Tharavadu	
12:30 – 12:40	Vote of thanks	Manikandan , Secretary, Wayanad District Tribal Development Action Council (WDTDAC)
	Rapporteurs: Angel Abraham, Himavarsha	

12:30 pm - 01:00 pm
Visiting Exhibition stalls
01:00 pm – 02:00 pm
LUNCH BREAK

02:00 – 04:00	Technical Session 1 Agrobiodiversity Conservation and Community Seed Systems: Practical Challenges and Way Forward Moderator: Dr C Thamban, Senior Fellow, MSSRF Session coordinator: Dr Archana Bhatt	
02:00 – 02:05	Welcome: Achuthan, member, WDTDAC	
02:05 – 02:20	Lead talk: Dr Rengalakshmi R. Executive Director, MSSRF	
02:20 – 02:50	Special Talk (Role of BMCs in Agrobiodiversity Conservation): Dr V Balakrishnan, Member Secretary, KSBB	
02:50 – 03:10	Special Talk (Medicinal plants conservation and AI): Dr Jaleel U C	
	Discussants	
03:10 – 03:45	Sri Sunil Kumar (Rice genetic resources)	
	Sri P Praseed (Rice genetic resources)	
	Sri Kelu Athikolly (Kurichya Rice Custodian Farmer)	
	Sri Babu Nellarachal (Custodian farmer, Tubers)	
	Smt Sumina, ADA Panamaram	
	BMC representative	
	Smt Devala, Farmer conservator	
	Sri Sooraj C S	
	Sri Sivan V V, Senior Scientist, MSSRF	
10 minutes	Reflections/Q &A/wrap up	
	Vote of Thanks: Binesh M K, MSSRF	
	Rapporteurs: Seba, Gloria	

04:00 – 04:15
TEA BREAK

04:15 – 05:30	Technical Session 2 Reviving Pepper Farming in Wayanad: Way Forward Session Coordinator: Sanil P C, Development Coordinator, MSSRF	
04:15 – 04:20	Welcome: Gopalan Cheeyambam, WDTDAC	
04:20 – 04:30	Lead talk: Dr Airina C K, Asst. Professor, Horticulture, College of Agriculture Wayanad	
	Discussants	
04:50 – 05:20	Sri Vinod, Asst Director, Agriculture, Mananthavady	

	Smt Sosamma, Farmer
	Sri Balakrishnan Kammana, Farmer scientist
	Sri Ayoob Thottoli, Farmer
	Sri Chiradeep, Farmer
	Sri Appi Bolan, Farmer
05:20 – 05:30	Reflections/Q &A/wrap up
	Vote of Thanks: Sanil P C, Development Coordinator, MSSRF
	Rapporteurs: Anusree, Emil

05:30 - 06:30	Cultural Evening
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Day 2: Sunday, 1st March 2026

10:00 - 12:30	Technical Session 3 Celebrating UN International Year of the Women Farmer Recognising Women in agriculture as conservators and agripreneurs Session Coordinator: C S Dhanya	
10:00 – 10:05	Welcome: Divya Athikkolli	
10:35 – 11:05	Honoring 3 women farmers for their contribution in agrobiodiversity conservation & sustainable agriculture and remarks	Dr Peeja Rajan, State Coordinator, UN Women India Smt Jisha K A, General Manager, District Industries Centre, Wayanad
11:05 – 11:25	Experience sharing 1. Smt Vani V Organic agripreneur, Best Woman Farmer (Karshaka Tilakam) 2. Thanima (Traditional seed production) 3. Smt Latha Edavaka 4. Smt Shibila, Agripreneur 5. Smt Sanooja, Sanooja Village Farm, Kozhikode 6. Smt Lily, Lily's farm	
11:25 – 12:05	Discussants Dr Divya K, The Gender Park, Kerala Smt Geetha N P, Women Protection Officer, Wayanad Lashitha, District Implementation Specialist (UN)	
12:05 – 12:30	Reflections/Q &A/wrap up	
	Vote of Thanks: C S Dhanya, MSSRF	
	Rapporteurs: Lasya, Himavarsha	

12:30 to 01:00

Local farm visit/stall visit

01:00 to 02:00

LUNCH BREAK

02:00 – 03:30	Special session "Wayanadan Karshikapperuma-Ormavazhikalilude" - The Agricultural legacy of Wayanad, A Journey down memory lane Moderator: Nandakumar, MSSRF
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	Session coordinator: Dr Vipindas P
02:00 – 02:05	Welcome: Krishnadas V P, Seed Care
	Participants:
02:05 – 03:30	Padmasree Cheruvayal Raman Peruvadi, Kelu V K Krishnan Kumbhamma Latha Edavaka Usha Vijayan Sivan Pilla mashu T C Joseph Achuthan Erumad Raghavan, Marodu Sukumaran Unni Karunakaran, Vadakkanad K T Kuriakose
	Vote of Thanks: Radha E, MSSRF
	Rapporteurs: Lakshmi Priya, Radha e

03:30 - 04:30	Valedictory Ceremony Session coordinator: Joseph John	
03:30 – 03:35	Welcome	Sri V. K. Krishnan , President, SEEDCARE
03:35 – 03:40	Presidential Address	Smt Meenakshi Raman , Block Panchayath President, Mananthavady
03:40 – 03:45	Chief Guest, Valedictory Address	Ms Meghasree, IAS , District Collector, Wayanad
03:45 – 03:50	Guest of Honour	Padmasree Cheruvayal Raman
03:50 – 04:05	Keynote Address	Dr N Anil Kumar , Chairman, Kerala State Biodiversity Board
04:05 – 04:15	Seed Exchange by Guest of Honour & Remarks	
	Participant mementos	
04:15 – 04:45	Felicitations	
	Smt Lathika M , Vice President, Vellamunda Panchayath	
	Sri Suresh Babu , Haritha Kerala Mission Coordinator	
	Smt Asoonpha , Agriculture Officer, Vellamunda	
	Sri T C Joseph , Convener, District Biodiversity Management Committee	
04:45 – 04:50	Recap of the Fest & Expectations of MSSRF	Smt. C S Dhanya , Scientist, MSSRF
04:50 – 04:55	Way Forward Plan	WDTDAC Representative
04:55 – 05:00	Vote of Thanks: Kelu, Athikkolli	
	Rapporteurs: Amarnath, Lakshmi Priya	