

Department of Atomic Energy



## BARC Unveils India's First Mutant Banana Variety 'Kaveri Vaaman'

Ripens 1.5 months earlier than the parent variety

Beneficial for both commercial growers and home farmers

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In a major advancement for Indian agriculture, the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC) has developed the country's first mutant banana variety, Trombay Banana Mutant-9 (TBM-9), officially released as 'Kaveri Vaaman' by the Government of India. This landmark development also marks the first fruit crop created and released by BARC, raising its total number of improved crop varieties to 72.

Dr. Ajit Kumar Mohanty, Secretary of the Department of Atomic Energy (DAE) and Chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC), hailed the release as a significant step toward revolutionizing horticultural crop improvement using ionizing radiation.

Speaking on the occasion of BARC Founder's Day 2025, BARC Director, Shri Vivek Bhasin highlighted the crucial role of gamma ray-induced mutagenesis in sustainably improving crop varieties. He noted that Kaveri Vaaman would benefit farmers who grow the widely cultivated Grande Naine banana, adding that the variety reflects BARC's expansion of its mutation breeding programme from traditional crops to fruit and other vegetatively

propagated plants.

Developed in collaboration with the ICAR-National Research Centre for Banana (NRCB), Tiruchirappalli, Kaveri Vaaman originated from the popular Grande Naine cultivar, which was subjected to gamma radiation to induce useful mutations. After years of screening and extensive field trials, TBM-9 was selected for its superior agronomic traits.

One of the most notable advantages of Kaveri Vaaman is its short stature, making it resistant to lodging—a common problem in tall banana plants, especially in windy coastal regions. This eliminates the need for wooden or bamboo props, significantly reducing cultivation costs. The new variety also matures 1.5 months earlier than the parental cultivar, allowing faster harvesting cycles. Despite these improvements, the fruit retains all the desirable taste and quality characteristics of Grande Naine.

The variety is also ideal for high-density plantation and terrace gardening, supporting both commercial growers and household cultivators.

Dr. Mohanty reiterated that crop improvement is a key component of DAE's mission to apply nuclear science for societal benefit. He commended ICAR institutes and State Agriculture Universities for their pivotal role in evaluating and releasing BARC-developed crop varieties.

The release of Kaveri Vaaman underscores India's growing capabilities in nuclear agriculture and offers farmers a resilient, cost-effective, and high-yielding banana variety for sustainable cultivation.



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