

flood-tolerant variety of rice developed in 1979!



Nekkanti Subba Rao with IR8 in 1967 and with Swarna Sub1 in 2001

Thanks to its short growth duration, pest-resistance and high yield, IR8 quickly became popular with Indian farmers. Being a dwarf variety, it could also withstand wind action unlike the traditional tall paddy. At a recent event to mark the 50th anniversary of the IR8 variety, eminent agricultural scientist Prof M.S. Swaminathan recalled how a farmer in Tamil Nadu's Thiruvannamalai district, K N Ganesan, had named his son Irettu (IR -ettu as 8 is 'ettu' in Tamil) after IR8. The farmer's yields had risen from two tonnes per hectare to 16 tonnes per hectare after using IR8!