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## **Savour brinjals, but not the GM variety**

Staff Reporter

*Brinjal Festival held to create awareness about ill-effects of genetically modified vegetable*

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*There are over 1,200 varieties of brinjals in the world*

*If there is genetic modification, all these would be lost*

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— PHOTO: NAGARA GOPAL



***variety fare:* Visitors at the Brinjal Festival held in Shilparamam on Sunday.**

Hyderabad: It is one vegetable that is savoured by many and listed in the menu during important occasions. Brinjal or egg plant can be cooked in several ways, but did you know that the vegetable has 1,200 varieties? That was the stunning piece of information learnt by visitors to the Brinjal Festival at Shilparamam.

The festival jointly organised by Deccan Development Society, Centre for Sustainable Agriculture, AID India and Chetana Organics, was an attempt to stop the government from promoting sale of genetically modified (GM) brinjals (egg plants) and create awareness about its ill-effects.

“At least 100 varieties of the 1,200 present around the world are grown in Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Orissa. We have showcased about 50 varieties here to make people realise that if there is genetic modification, all these would be lost,” said S. Kiran from DDS.

At the festival, visitors, especially women lined up at the food stalls where various

lip-smacking dishes made from brinjals were being served. "I don't think the government should promote sales of genetically modified brinjals. Food should be grown according to nature's way and not by man-made practices," said M. Rekha, a homemaker.

Various short films were screened during the event to educate visitors about the health implications of consuming GM brinjals. "GM brinjals affect the growth and development in the body and is also known to cause pre-cancerous cell development, apart from reducing liver size and causing diarrhoea," claimed Mr. Kiran. Visitors were also requested to sign a petition to voice their protest against the sale or promotion of GM crops and foods. Organisers said that the petition would later be sent to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh.

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