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**SELLAMUTTU KRISHNASAMY**

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# Climate change gives town's banana man a fruitful crop

Gardening professionals praise Maidonid's efforts in producing a fruit which is notoriously difficult to grow in the UK



By Laura Enfield laurae@maldenads.co.uk

AS TEMPERATURES in Maidenhed soared last week, people began peeling off their winter layers to catch some sun - but one man has been going bananas over peel of a different kind.

Avid gardener Sellamattu Krishnasamy spends hours nurturing the plants at his home in St Marks Crescent and has created a tropical paradise including palm trees and exotic flowers.

He was astonished when the recent heat caused one of his plants to burst into life and yield a bright yellow banana.

The 71-year-old said: "I love bananas and this is the first one I have had. I was really happy because I haven't seen one anywhere else."

He became a real-life banana man after using his super gardening powers to grow the fruit, which thrives on humidity and normally cannot cope with the cold English weather.

The retired electrical engineer started off with one plant six years ago, which has thrived under his care, and he now has about 10.

**A-PEELING:** Krishnasamy Sellamattu shows off the tropical paradise, complete with banana, that he has grown in his back garden. Ref:952042

Mr Krishnasamy said: "They are still coming up and it's a little tropical paradise. I have got palms and ferns."

He does not use any special equipment to grow the yellow fruit but is an experienced gardener and enjoys the challenge of growing tropical plants.

The father of two said: "I don't do anything special. I just put a bit of ground feed down.

Luckily it's at the end of the house and cold wind doesn't blow straight on it because the other house blocks it."

The plants get tucked up under a cover every winter to protect them and this spring when he unwrapped them he noticed a unusual swelling on one plant.

He said: "I couldn't believe there was going to be fruit but it got bigger and bigger and then a few weeks ago it really came out and I knew it was going to be a banana.

"I am really proud of all my hard work."

Berkshire College of Agriculture has a wide variety of unusual plants including bananas, but these are grown in a green house.

Deborah Smirfit, team leader for horticulture at the college, said: "It's extremely unusual with our climate to grow them outside because bananas like humidity. She said they

have never heard of one being grown outside before and added: "The next test will be whether he gets enough heat to ripen it enough to eat."

Bananas are not grown commercially in the UK because of the expense involved but we consume six billion of them a year.

Paul Barrett, brand manager for leading fruit retailer Fyffes, confirmed that the fruit's appearance in a garden was very unusual and said: "If he has grown them outside he has done very well."

A Maidenhed resident for 26 years, Mr Krishnasamy is originally from Sri Lanka where he said bananas are everywhere and grew at his childhood home.

He said: "The bananas there are huge big plants not like the small thin ones you get here."

His aim is to eventually have a lovely bunch of bananas and he said: "Hopefully if I work hard I will get them to grow bigger and

will have more fruit."

There were more than 300 banana-related accidents in Britain, most involving people slipping on skins, in 2001.

- A total of 35,000 bananas will be eaten by players, linemen and ball boys and girls at this year's Wimbledon
- The word banana comes from the Arabic word 'banan' meaning finger
- Banana skins can reduce swelling and irritation on mosquito bites
- The average American consumes over 84 bananas each year

## Mail Online

# Bananas and pineapples grow in tropical Britain

Meanwhile, a seventy-old gardener originally from Sri Lanka, was thrilled when he managed to produce fruit from a group of banana trees in Maidenhed, more commonly found in his homeland.

"I love bananas," Sellamattu Krishnasamy said.  
 "This is the first one I've had and I was really happy because I haven't seen one anywhere else.  
 It is opening up but it takes quite some time."

After ordering the plant seeds several years ago he placed them in a sheltered spot by a south-facing wall at the end of the garden at his semi-detached home in Maidenhed. From just one seedling, a bit of loving care has expanded his crop to 10 plants.

Each winter, as the leaves dropped off, he has covered each plant to protect it from the cold, opening it up again to the sun's rays in the spring.





## **APPRECIATION**

The family would like to thank you all for your kind support during this time of sadness



Refreshments will be served after the service at  
The Craufurd Arms  
15 Gringer Hill  
Maidenhead  
SL6 7LY

## **DONATIONS**

Donations, if desired, may be made in Sellamuttu's memory to  
**The Alzheimer's Society**