

Editorial

Underutilized Horticultural Genetic Resources: Conservation and Utilization (UHGRUCU)

India is bestowed with rich plant diversity including the diversity of important horticultural species. Many of these species, though have potential, are mostly grown regionally and are poorly studied. Further, landraces and wild relatives of commercially cultivated species are fast disappearing due to several reasons. Lack of awareness about these genetic resources coupled with limited traditional preferences for them pose specific challenges in their conservation and utilization. Creation of awareness about their nutritional and ecological importance is the foremost requirement to attract the attention of researchers/ stakeholders on these issues. The present Special Issue deals with articles representing various research aspects of underutilized horticultural genetic resources.

As the special issue is being launched after the immensely successful National Conference on Underutilized Horticultural Genetic Resources: Conservation and Utilization (NCUHGR-2022), a succinct event report has been included for the benefit of the general readers. Invited article on kokum (*Garcinia indica*) is a success story of conservation and sustainable utilization of a threatened species through systematic interventions. An overview of research efforts made for crop improvement in indigenous vegetables of Andaman and Nicobar Islands has been presented. The article on interspecific diversity of fagaceous nuts from Meghalaya creates awareness about this largely lesser known group of temperate nuts. Intraspecific natural diversity of *Artocarpus heterophyllus* from Tripura, *Annona reticulata* from Maharashtra and *Zanthoxylum rhetsa* from Goa has been studied in respective articles for various morphological and biochemical parameters with an objective to identify desirable genotypes. The article on *Trichosanthes dioica* deals with DUS characterization of genotypes for morphological parameters. Studies on parameters influencing germination and seedling vigour in endemic *Garcinia dhanikhariensis* and seasonal performance of vegetative propagation techniques in *Tamarindus indica* have been included in this issue. Effect of vermicompost was studied on an herbal spice- *Eryngium foetidum* in a novel production technique developed for urban and peri-urban cultivation. Significance of weeds found in the interspaces of oil palm plantations has been highlighted in a study from Andhra Pradesh. Standardization of ultrasound assisted extraction process for gymnemagenin in *Gymnema sylvestre* provides interesting information on this medicinally important species. Processing of *Moringa oleifera* leaves using different methods and their effect on its sensory parameters in different packaging materials was also studied and included in the present issue.

Through this issue, an effort has been made to highlight the need and significance of underutilized horticultural species for achieving livelihood, nutritional and ecological security.

Jai Hind!

Prof. Dr. Sisir Kumar Mitra

Dr. Desh Beer Singh

Dr. Pooja Bohra

Dr. Ajit Arun Waman

[Editors, JASA (Special Issue- UHGRUCU)]