

Aromatic Plants Cultivation and Utilization

Description:

Cultivation of aromatic species gives scope to improve the quality of the drugs. Specialty materials such as essential oils, pharmaceuticals, colorants, dyes, cosmetics and biocides are obtained from plants. Many species of aromatic plants are cultivated for such industrial uses, but most are still wild collected. The need for renewable sources of industrial products as well as the need to protect plant biodiversity creates an opportunity for farmers to produce such crops.

Aromatic plants possess odorous volatile substances which occur as essential oil, gum exudate, balsam and oleoresin in one or more parts, namely, root, wood, bark, stem, foliage, flower seed and fruit. The characteristic aroma is due to a variety of complex chemical compounds. The term essential oil is similar to fragrance or perfumes because these fragrances are oily in nature and they represent the essence or the active constituents of the plants. Essential oils and aroma chemicals constitute a major group of industrial products.

These plant materials continue to play positive roles in human life, as sources of modern pharmaceuticals to treat medical problems, as herbs and spices to tempt the palate, and in a multitude of other applications. Demand and trade for these plant materials initiated globalization that spread new ideas and new settlements along with native resentment.

India is rich in biodiversity and host of many medicinal and aromatic plants which are now being used for various ailments and as nutraceuticals. In India, two major scientific councils are working on medicinal and aromatic plants. One is Central Institute of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants under CSIR which is looking at industry point of view and other is Directorate of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants under ICAR which is looking at farmers point of view.

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