

SKILL DEVELOPMENT TRAINING UNDER VAN VIGYAN KENDRA, MANIPUR

Rain Forest Research Institute, Jorhat (Assam) organized one-day Skill Development Training programme under Van Vigyan Kendra, Manipur on 25th March, 2019 at Forest Training School, Mantripukhuri, Imphal for the frontline forest officials of State Forest Department, Manipur. Total 41 Forest Guards participated in the training. At the outset, Shri L. I. Singh, Director, Forest Training School welcomed all the participants. He spoke about the importance of skill development training to frontline officials of the State Forest Department. He appreciated the effort of RFRI to hold such training at Manipur.

First Technical Session was conducted by Dr. R. K. Borah, Scientist-F, RFRI, Jorhat who delivered a detailed presentation on 'Nursery and Plantation Management and Artificial Induction of Agarwood (*Aquilaria malaccensis*)'. *Aquilaria malaccensis* Lamk., locally known as *Agar* or *Xanchi*, belonging to the Thymelaceae family, is a precious floral wealth of North-East India. The tree is known to produce dark coloured resinous wood known as agarwood or eaglewood formed in the heartwood of the tree as a result of host- fungus interaction. He gave detailed presentation the nursery, cultivation and artificial induction of agar oil.

He also delivered another presentation on 'Parkia (*Parkia roxburghii*) Mortality and Management in Manipur. Parkia, commonly known as Yongchuk, is an important tree vegetable of South East Asia, especially North Eastern India. It is distributed in India, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Java, Thailand, Egypt and the Malaysian region. In North East India, tree bean is found in Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland and Tripura.

The immature tender pods are consumed during its developmental stages and are one of the favourite foods among the people of Manipur as well as the neighboring North Eastern states for its unique taste and flavour. Tree bean is having a variety of uses, viz. human food, medicine, insecticide, pesticide, antibacterial, allopath, tanning, face wash, shampoo, firewood and paper pulp.

Pods and seeds are widely utilized, especially in the villages for curing toothache and diarrhoea. The seeds as well as the tender pods are known to cure stomach disorder, abdominal colic, bleeding piles and regulate liver function. The bark and leaves of Parkia are used in lotions for

skin diseases, eczema and ulcers. The leaves and roots are also used in preparing lotion for sore eyes.

Despite a variety of uses, unfortunately the tree bean plants are under threat and there is vast decline in their population in some parts of NE India particularly in Manipur, Mizoram and Nagaland. The diseased symptoms are first noticed as yellowing of leaves and die back of twigs. Dark necrotic lesions are noticed all over the main stems and branches. Subsequently, tree exhibited symptoms of blister bark. It is also noticed that affected trees developed vertical cracks and splits in the main stem. The adult beetle of *Coptops aedifecator* (long horned beetle) was found infesting heavily on the *Parkia* trees. Shot hole borers were also noticed. The pests made the holes in the stem/branches of the tree like the shot of a gun on any surface. *Parkia* trees growing in the water logged areas exhibited symptoms of root decay and the fungus *Fusarium oxysporum* was frequently isolated from the decayed root.

Mrs. Ellora Dutta Borah, ACTO, RFRI, Jorhat delivered presentation on Bamboo Cultivation and Management and also imparted hands-on training on “Vegetative propagation of Bamboo”.

The programme ended with the distribution of certificates to the participants.

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