

Two-Day Workshop on High Altitude Medicinal Plants at FRI

The use of medicinal plants has been documented since ancient times in the Indian civilization though at present appropriate and sustainable techniques need to be standardized to conserve the species of medicinal plants. The Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education (ICFRE) director general Ashwani Kumar said this at the inaugural session of a two-day workshop on high altitude medicinal plants at the Forest Research Institute (FRI) here on Monday.

Speaking on the occasion, the ICFRE DG said that there is great potential in India for medicinal plants, especially the medicinal herbs found in the high altitude areas. Modern research and development efforts has been inadequate in so far as high altitude medicinal plants are concerned, said Kumar.

He said, “The use of medicinal plants has ancient roots in Indian civilization’s history and culture and has also been documented in old sculptures and literature. Presently, appropriate and sustainable harvesting techniques need to be standardised in order to conserve the species of medicinal plants,” stressed the council DG.

Later, in the first technical session, NS Chauhan from the university of Horticulture and Forestry, Solan (Himachal Pradesh) spoke on the diversity, utilisation and availability of high altitude medicinal plants in Himachal Pradesh.

Former advisor to Uttarakhand medicinal and aromatic plants board, MR Uniyal presented a brief overview of the utilisation of high altitude medicinal plants by the pharmaceutical industry in India. He stressed on the importance of correct identification of high altitude medicinal plants. From the Himalayan Forest Research Institute at Shimla in Himachal Pradesh, Dr Vaneet Jishtu addressed the gathering regarding the red-listed medicinal plants and their conservation status.

According to the council officials, the two day workshop on high altitude medicinal plants is aimed at providing a forum for facilitating interaction among policy makers, State forest departments, research organisations, nongovernmental organisations, law enforcing agencies, high altitude medicinal plant growers, traders and various stakeholders.

By facilitating better understanding of the technicalities of the medicinal plant sector, the workshop is focused on achieving further improvement in efforts towards harnessing the considerable scope presented by the high altitude medicinal plant wealth.

The ICFRE ADG Dr TP Singh, DDG (research) Dr Vimal Kothiyal, scientist Shilpa Gautam and VRS Rawat among others also addressed the gathering in the inaugural session.

The additional principal chief conservator of forests, Government of Himachal Pradesh, Arvind Alipuria, ICFRE DDG (Administration) A.S. Rawat and scientists were also among those who attended the inaugural session of the workshop sponsored by the National Medicinal Plants Board (NMPB) of the Department of Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homoeopathy (AYUSH) of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

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