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## TECHNOLOGY DEMONSTRATIONS

IHT recognized as Scientific and Industrial Research Organization- SIRO by DSIR, Ministry of Science and Technology, Govt. of India. IHT undertakes a number of R&D and Technology Demonstration projects in varied agro climatic conditions of the country for horticulture crop production with modern technology and finding solutions to the problems faced by the farmers. Brief note of some of the projects just concluded is given hereunder:

### A. Breaking the Barrier of Saffron Cultivation through Technological Interventions

Saffron is the most expensive spice and there is huge gap between demand and production of saffron in India and other countries. Different strategies are being employed to promote saffron cultivation including farming in low altitude regions, improving corm productivity, microbial intervention and modern methods such as soilless and protected cultivation. Along with developing specific agro practice for non-traditional areas, novel technological intervention like soil less can go a long way in enhancing productivity of saffron for catering to National need and tapping international market. Under the project sponsored by Department of Biotechnology, Government of India, Institute of Horticulture Technology has been successful in cultivated saffron in soilless medium under protected conditions in 100 m<sup>2</sup> specially designed facility in Dami, Shimla, Himachal Pradesh. This is the first time saffron has been cultivated in the area.



Standardization of soilless cultivation of saffron in different growing media viz. Perlite, Coco chips and Cocopeat under protected conditions.

Being first year for the project the corms were sourced from Pampore, Kashmir and three mediums Perlite, Coco chips and Cocopeat were tried in vertical working stations. Coco chips were superior to the other two media in number of flowers harvested in the growing media. The quality of the stigma's with respect to the chemicals like crocin, picrocrocin and safranal which impart the distinct colour, flavour and aroma, respectively in saffron was at par with the content of the samples from Kashmir and a sample from international market from Dubai.

The technology is being demonstrated to the growers interesting in saffron cultivation in the adjoining area in Himachal Pradesh. This multi institutional project aims to expand commercial cultivation of saffron in Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand and J&K. When agro practices and soilless cultivation of saffron gets standardised, the commercial production with the technology can be taken up by the progressive farmers by cultivating saffron in an open field and protected cultivation in non-traditional areas as envisaged in the project.



*Saffron in flowering in coco chips as growing media in protected conditions in Dami, Shimla, Himachal Pradesh*

## B. Orchid Production in Villages of Assam and Meghalaya

The project was conceived on hub and spoke model and aims at end to end demonstrations of commercial cut flower Dendrobium production technology right at the village level on cluster based approach for farmers of Assam and Meghalaya. The farmers were provided hands on training in their demonstration units for the complete package of practices. The beneficiary farmers were provided tissue cultured quality plants of different ages, orchid house, growing media, fertilizers and other inputs. Beneficiaries' units were used for trainings to connect local stakeholders. As a result of the project Assam and Meghalaya farmers became familiar with orchids cultivation. The farmers are now well trained in orchids cultivation and have continued the cultivation of orchids after the conclusion of the project. The project has helped and in future will help the farmers to increase their livelihood income.



*Handholding of beneficiary farmers for Post-Harvest Management of dendrobium cut flower - harvesting and packaging of orchids spikes at beneficiary farmer's field in Goalpara and IHT Mandira Assam*



## C. Strawberry Cultivation in Meghalaya

Under this project appropriate crop production modules/agro technological packages have been demonstrated to farmers at Bio-Resources Development Centre- BRDC, Meghalaya and 50 farmers were identified and selected for establishment of demonstration units in their fields in districts of West & East Khasi Hills, Jaintia Hills and Garo Hills of state. The farmers were provided with all the inputs including tissue cultured plants of popular varieties like Camorosa, Sweet Charlie, Chandler and imported sweet strawberry variety Seolhyang along with trainings at different growth stages of the crop to standardize the production practices and familiarize the farmers on the same. Total land area of 25.04 acres was covered under the project. Out of which, 15.15 acres has been covered in the 50 farmers' fields – 15 acres (each of 0.30 acres) and 0.15 acres in BDRC, Meghalaya with popular dominant varieties of strawberry.



*Some glimpse of the strawberry cultivation in farmer's demonstration units established in their fields*

D. The Institute continues to work on production on malbhog banana, virus free citrus seedlings, high quality turmeric production, disease free vegetables seedlings, bio-fertilizers & bio-pesticides, generation of walnut planting material, hydroponically grown saffron and different aromatic plants in NE states.

## UPCOMING TRAINING PROGRAMMES

S. No.	Title	Duration	Mode of Training
1.	Landscape Horticulture	2 Week	Online cum Offline
2.	Commercial Hydroponics	2 Week	Online cum Offline
3.	Protected Cultivation of Vegetables Crops	1 Week	Offline
4.	Online Basic Hydroponic	3 Days	Online

*\*Customized courses on protected cultivation of vegetable crops, commercial hydroponics, mushroom cultivation, vegetables nursery production, forest plant nursery management, commercial hydroponic also offered on demand.*

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