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International Webinar on Speed Breeding – 3rd Session

The School of Speed Breeding of Institute of Horticulture Technology (IHT), Greater Noida, successfully organized a national webinar titled “Accelerating Crop Improvement: Integrating Speed Breeding and Modern Technologies.” The webinar aimed to foster knowledge exchange on the pivotal role of speed breeding, biofortification and other advanced breeding technologies in enhancing the efficiency and impact of crop improvement programmes in India.

The event brought together a distinguished panel of speakers, including eminent policy makers, veteran academic leaders and leading scientists at the forefront of agricultural innovation. The webinar served as a significant platform to discuss strategies for integrating these cutting-edge technologies into mainstream agricultural research and education. Approximately 100 participants, including faculty members, scientists, researchers and students from various State and Central Agricultural Universities across India, attended the webinar, making it a widely representative and impactful event.

Dr. Parminder Virk Advisor, HarvestPlus Solutions; Former Head of Crop Development, HarvestPlus delivered a masterful presentation on integrating biofortification with speed breeding. He detailed the strategic and technical processes involved in developing and deploying nutrient-enriched staple crops to combat hidden hunger. His insights into building global breeding pipelines were particularly enlightening.

Among the main speakers were Dr. Uma Maheshwar Singh (Trait Deployment Lead, IRRI South Asia, Varanasi) who shared his expertise on translating advanced breeding tools into accelerated genetic gains in rice. He elaborated on how speed breeding and precise trait deployment can make breeding programs more efficient and resilient.

Dr. Dharminder Bhatia (Senior Scientist, Punjab Agricultural University, Ludhiana) provided a ground-level perspective on establishing and operating a speed-breeding facility in an Indian agricultural university. His presentation on implementing rapid generation advancement systems was highly practical and informative.

Dr. Neha Pandey (Senior Scientist, IHT, Greater Noida) presented on the ongoing speed breeding and controlled environment research at IHT. She discussed her work on developing protocols for various crops, integrating precision phenotyping and leading a multidisciplinary team to accelerate crop improvement through translational technologies.

The webinar concluded with a formal vote of thanks by Dr. Kureel Director IHT he expressed profound gratitude to all the distinguished speakers for sharing their invaluable insights



Capacity Building Trainings in IHT

In November 2025, the Institute of Horticulture Technology (IHT) organized a series of practical and knowledge-based training programs for learners across India. These online and offline courses covered modern horticulture topics and provided participants with theory sessions, demonstrations and hands-on learning. Trainees from different states joined to upgrade their skills in mushroom farming, protected cultivation, hydroponics, saffron, orchids, herbs and landscape management.

Mushroom Cultivation

The mushroom training covered all important steps needed to start mushroom farming. Trainees learned about different types of mushrooms, compost preparation, spawn production, casing and the correct methods of harvesting. The faculty explained how to maintain hygiene, control pests and diseases and pack mushrooms for the market. Online batches focused on theory, while offline sessions provided hands-on practice in compost making and production house management. Participants appreciated the clear demonstrations and found the course helped them understand the full process from production to marketing. Many trainees shared that they now feel confident to start a small mushroom unit.



Hands on training on mushroom cultivation techniques

Protected Cultivation & Vegetable Management

IHT organised a 5-day course on polyhouse farming which included techniques to grow vegetables in the protected structures like greenhouses, polyhouse, nethouse and low tunnels. The training included topics such as climate control, soil health management, variety selection, nursery raising drip and fertigation systems and pest management. Trainees practically handled handling greenhouse tools, preparing beds and monitoring temperature and humidity. Hands-on sessions helped them understand how to manage crops more efficiently and increase yield. Many participants shared that the course gave them practical ideas for improving their existing vegetable farms and adopting protected cultivation for higher income.



Hands-on training on protected cultivation

Saffron Cultivation

IHT organized a comprehensive training programme on saffron cultivation through both online and offline batches. The course guided trainees through the entire process of growing saffron—from selecting healthy corms and preparing the planting medium to managing flowering and harvesting. Trainers explained the ideal climate, soil and container requirements, along with modern methods to improve productivity. Online sessions covered theory, cultivation economics and market potential, while offline classes included live demonstrations on planting and handling corms. Participants shared that the training cleared many doubts about growing saffron in Indian conditions and helped them understand the correct scientific steps needed for successful saffron farming.



Hands-on training on saffron cultivation

Commercial Hydroponic Farming

IHT organized two-week course on commercial hydroponic farming, designed for entrepreneurs interested in setting up or expanding hydroponic ventures. During the online week, trainees learned about different hydroponic systems, nutrient management, pH and EC control, crop planning and cost analysis. The offline week at IHT provided hands-on practice with NFT, DWC and vertical systems, along with demonstrations on transplanting, nutrient preparation, climate management and harvesting. Participants worked directly in live hydroponic units and gained practical skills for running a profitable hydroponic farm. Trainees appreciated the balanced approach of theory, field exposure and business guidance.



Hands-on training on commercial hydroponic



Landscape & Garden Maintenance

IHT organized a five-day training programme on landscape and garden maintenance to help participants improve their practical gardening skills. The course covered essential topics such as plant selection, soil preparation, pruning methods, lawn management, irrigation planning, pest control and the use of garden tools. Trainees took part in hands-on activities including pruning, bed preparation, lawn care practices and plant health assessment in the IHT landscape area. The simple and practice-oriented teaching approach helped learners understand long-term garden upkeep. Participants shared that the training strengthened their confidence and skills for maintaining residential, institutional and commercial landscapes.



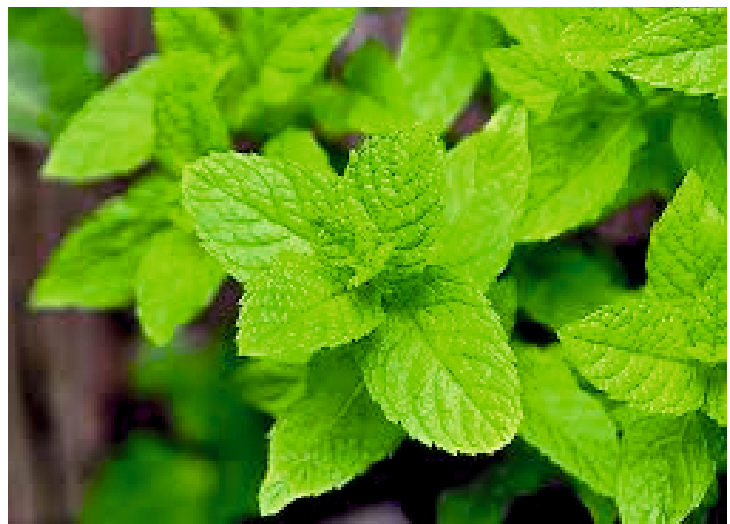
Hands-on training on Landscape Gardening

Orchid Cultivation

IHT organized a three-day online training programme on orchid cultivation, designed for beginners as well as hobby growers. The course introduced participants to different types of orchids, their growth behaviour, suitable potting media, watering requirements, shade management and nutrient application. Trainers also explained common diseases and simple methods to prevent them. Because the programme was fully online, trainees from various locations were able to join easily. The sessions were delivered in clear, simple language and participants appreciated the opportunity to interact directly with experts and get their questions answered. The training received positive feedback for being practical and easy to understand.

Hydroponic Herbs Cultivation

IHT organized a short online course on hydroponic herbs cultivation, focusing on popular herbs like basil, mint, coriander, oregano and thyme. Participants learned the basics of preparing nutrient solutions, selecting containers, setting up small hydroponic units and managing water and nutrients. Trainers also explained pest control methods and maintenance practices to keep herbs healthy. The sessions demonstrated how herbs can be grown in balconies, terraces, kitchen gardens and small commercial hydroponic setups. Trainees appreciated the simple and practical guidance and shared that the training motivated them to grow fresh, chemical-free herbs at home or start small-scale herb production.



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