

NEWS

Free journals

Journal of Clinical Investigation
Developmental Biology
British Medical Journal
Neurobiology of Disease
Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report
MMWR
International Journal of Systematic Bacteriology
Biochemical Journal
Emerging Infectious Diseases
Journal of Hepatology
Journal of Neurosurgery
American Journal of Clinical Pathology

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Journal of Cell Biology
Journal of Virology
Journal of Clinical Microbiology
Infection and Immunity
Journal of Bacteriology
Antimicrobial Agents and Chemotherapy

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Genes & Development
EMBO Journal
American Journal of Human Genetics
Development
Circulation
Blood
Clinical Microbiology Reviews
Circulation Research
Journal of Biological Chemistry
Journal of Immunology
Molecular Endocrinology
American Journal of Pathology
Genome Research
Arteriosclerosis, Thrombosis, and Vascular Biology
Molecular Biology and Evolution
Journal of Cell Science
Molecular Pharmacology
Hypertension
American Journal of Respiratory and Critical Care Medicine
Journal of Clinical Endocrinology and Metabolism
Endocrinology
Stroke

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Journal of Neuroscience
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Journal of Infect. Diseases
Radiology
Journal of General Physiology

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AJP – Regulatory, Integrative and Comparative Physiology

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European Journal of Gastroenterology and Hepatology
Experimental Biology and Medicine

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Clinical Diabetes
Indian Journal of Psychiatry
Pre Hospital Immediate Care
Revista Española de Enfermedades Digestivas
Clinical Diabetes
Revista Chilena de Enfermedades Respiratorias

The following journals are not free anymore

European Journal of Cardio-Thoracic Surgery
Annals of Thoracic Surgery

Plant biodiversity and its conservation*

A National Symposium on Plant Biodiversity and its Conservation was organized to make an overall assessment of plant diversity, identify the particular species of plants and suggest measures to conserve the rare and threatened species.

Nearly 150 scientists belonging to 50 institutions participated and presented their findings in three technical sessions: (i) Plant Biodiversity and its Conservation Strategies, (ii) Genetic Diversity including Physiological Diversity; (iii) Microbial Diversity. There were nine plenary lectures in addition.

In his keynote address, P. K. Khosla (Himachal Pradesh Agricultural University, Palampur) stressed the importance of biodiversity and its conservation. Biodiversity included all organisms and species, their genetic variations as well as their complex assemblages of communities and ecosystems.

Delivering the presidential address, Jasbir Singh Ahluwalia (Punjabi University, Patiala) said that ecological crisis is becoming so acute, that it has put a question mark on the very existence of life on earth. This was a phenomenon caused by man, being the by-product of urbanization and industrialization. Ahluwalia stated that the environmental concerns were well reflected in the 1992 Rio Earth Summit, but the blitzkrieg of globalization was moving fast in the opposite direction. What was needed was not merely new biotechnologies that would ensure 'sustainable development' using and still replenishing natural resources, but an attitudinal change towards nature of the kind enshrined in Indian philosophical and religious traditions that recognize nature as a living organism, with integral, inter-department bonds amongst man, flora and fauna on earth. Ecology and environment should be seen not merely as the external physical conditions for the survival of life on this planet, but add the constituent of life in all its forms.

In the first of the series of plenary lectures, D. N. Sen (J. N. V. University, Jodhpur) elaborated on biodiversity and ecological adaptations of desert plants. According to him, Rajasthan desert is among the ecologically important regions of India in the diversity of its biological species. The western Indian Thar desert represents a characteristic environment where plants have adapted to arid conditions. Sand dunes comprising vast mounds of shifting sand, devoid of plants and human habitats are very common. A considerable part of the Rajasthan desert contains some salt basins or lakes. The high soil salinity allows only a sparse cover of salt-tolerant species. He emphasized the need for plantation of native desert plant species on a large scale, for conservation and stabilization of sand dunes and plains and also to maintain native biodiversity. T. R. Sahu (H. S. Gour Vishwavidyalaya Sagar, MP) spoke on 'Biodiversity: Basic concepts and strategies for conservation'. Plant diversity as a global resource remains poorly understood, inadequately documented and often wasted, but still possesses immense potential for further development of natural products. With the explosive growth of human population, the life support system of earth is becoming increasingly threatened as the rate of global change accelerates. T. Pulliah (Sri Krishnadevaraya University, Ananthapur) highlighted the Pteridophytic flora of Andhra Pradesh (AP), while laying emphasis on endangered plants in AP, which need immediate conservation strategy for protection. S. P. Vij (Panjab University, Chandigarh) focused on the orchid diversity, which deserves the pride of place amongst flowering plants. Mentioning various aspects of orchid diversity, threats and succours, he stressed on proper understanding of ecology and reproductive biology of orchids to conserve them and for their proper management. S. P. Khullar (Panjab University) discussed diversity in Himalayan ferns, which is an integral part of the forests. S. S. Bir (Punjabi University) mentioned about the natural plant resources of India, which is endowed with a rich heritage of plant re-

sources. These plant resources grow and flourish in highly variable climatic and soil conditions. He emphasized on the urgent need to adopt the 'Indian tradition of conservation', i.e. religious practices of protecting specific plants or entire ecosystem along with *in situ* and *ex situ* methods for regeneration of natural vegetation. I. S. Dua (Panjab University) called for understanding biodiversity and conservation of plant species outside the forest. There is an urgent need to understand first the physiological behaviour of a plant which it adapted while acclimatizing outside the forest. He discussed the origin of protocity in ancestral archaeoflora and its evolution among different plant groups and regarded physiological biodiversity as a life-sustaining tool for plants to conserve outside forests or in national parks, wildlife sanctuaries and in biosphere reserves. B. S. Gill (Punjabi University) dwelt with issues and priorities for conservation of Indian forest genetic resources. He pointed out that special attention should be paid for recalcitrant tree seeds for *ex situ* conservation. Conservation of tree genetic resources should be integrated into basic framework of sustainable forest management. K. G. Mukerji (University of Delhi, Delhi) elaborated on the ecology and distribution of vesicular arbuscular mycorrhizal fungi which are the most widespread in their distribution among the plant species and geographically are believed to be disseminated inter-continentially prior to continental drift, as supported by fossil record of earlier plants. Because most economically-important plants form this type of mycorrhiza, this area of research has attracted much attention.

In Technical Session I, papers relating to various aspects of plant biodiversity and conservation strategies were presented and discussed. R. S. Dhanda (Department of Forestry and Natural Resources, College of Agriculture, PAU, Ludhiana) presented data relating to the degradation of forest diversity and its conservation strategy in Punjab. The tiny segment of land under forest cover, has been usurped by the ever-growing expansion of agriculture to meet the increasing demand for food,

*A report on the two-day 'National Symposium on Plant Biodiversity and its Conservation', held in the Department of Botany, Punjabi University, Patiala during 14-15 February 2001.