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Herbs for Good Health. T. D. Nirmala Devi, S. Armugasamy and K. Vijayalatha. 2005. 12 pp. Price: Rs 35.

This publication describes 20 common Indian herbs along with their photographs that help the reader in their identification. It gives the methods in which these are to be used for a large variety of ailments covering cough and cold, headache, fever, indigestion, constipation, skin diseases, cuts and burns, etc. A useful publication for every household.

Organic Cotton Cultivation. K. Vijayalakshmi *et al.* 2005. 38 pp. Price: Rs 75.

This publication describes the method of cultivation of organic cotton, the export market for which is on the increase. Cotton growers in India are the heaviest consumers of pesticides, which many a times leads to heavy financial losses. This publication gives a detailed description of pests and diseases of cotton along with photographs, and describes the organic methods (without pesticides) of their control. However, use of 'Panchagavya' made of cow dung, urine, milk, curd, ghee, yellow plantain and coconut water for controlling dropping of squares, flowers and young bolls of cotton, has not yet been proved scientifically. With the exception of Panchagavya this publication will be useful to cotton growers.

Organic Paddy Cultivation. K. Vijayalakshmi *et al.* 2004. 101 pp. Price: Rs 125.

A well-written publication describing in detail the cultivation of organic paddy (rice), including the methods of controlling diseases and pests. Photographs of insect pests and diseased plants are excellent and will greatly help the farmers in identifying them. It also lists traditional varieties of paddy in Tamil Nadu. However, this publication also mentions Panchkavya (or is it Panchgavya) as in organic cotton, which has not been proven scientifically. Although written for Tamil Nadu farmers, rice growers in other parts of India will also find this publication useful.

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Handbook of Industrial Crops. V. L. Chopra and K. V. Peter (eds). The Haworth Press Inc, New York. 535 pp.

The principal aim of the editors, two distinguished Agricultural scientists, has been to provide an integrated. assessment of the present scenario regarding diverse aspects of productivity of twelve industrial crops, through authoritative information provided by experts of good standing in each of these crops, making this a creditworthy, integrated exercise to provide a consolidated picture of industrial crops. In a meaningful introduction, the editors highlight that the book was launched from the view-point of evolutionary biology and commercial agriculture. As basic information on genetic architecture and evolutionary process relating to these crops is far from adequate, the book lays stress on all aspects of cultivation and trade. The choice of the crops discussed essentially relates to industrial products involving edible oils, beverages, resins, antioxidants, drugs, latex, with reference to crops such as arecanut, coconut, palmyra, tea, coffee, cocoa, cardamom and cinchona. Each of the chapters provides information ranging from such aspects as their origin, distribution and taxonomy to breeding, cytotaxonomy, role of pests and diseases, biotechnology, industrial application and management.

Interesting information on the geographical distribution of the different crops, their state-wise area and productivity, cytogenetics of cultivars, hybridization programmes for exploiting variability in various germplasm, cropping systems, including mixed cropping, impact of diseases and insect attack, besides research and development organizations related to each of the crops, as well as their future outlook, have been meticulously documented. The current scenario has been involved keeping in view an international outlook in terms of development and marketability. Research and development on some of these crops in various countries have enabled the plantation industry to become increasingly science-based and economically viable, also keeping in mind the impact of globalization, product diversification and development of products meeting consumer quality requirements, enabling R&D institutions such as the Cardamom, Rubber, Coffee and Tea Boards across the globe to gear up to meet future challenges.

Information on the end-products of many of these crops useful in the industry has been provided, such as cashew kernel, a rich source of tannin, of great demand by the leather industry, with 33 different grades of kernels among which 26 are commercially available and exported. Similarly, wattle bark extract with a tannin content of 30–40% is a rapid tanning material. The utilitarian value of cinchona bark in the production of quinine, multiple uses of palmyra, technology improvement of extraction of coconut oil, cardamom oleoresins for flavouring foods, besides the processing technology of other crop products have been provided.

Biotechnological aspects have been adequately discussed having bearing on biosynthetic pathways, such as indole alkaloids in crops such as cinchona, and palmitic and oleic acid synthetic pathways in oil palm, to mention some instances. Molecular tools such as markers have been included, involving techniques such as RFLP and microsatellites to be deployed for the analysis and distribution of genetic diversity, enabling future combination with higher probability of significant improvement, for example, aspects like hybrid seed productivity, *in vitro* propagation and the like. Technological developments relating to crops such as rubber have been discussed, notably the development of latex timber clones aimed at a higher latex and timber yield.

This carefully thought out publication provides interesting information on the utilitarian aspects in respect of their industrial value, their potential application