

ANNOUNCEMENTS

INDIAN JOURNAL OF NATURAL PRODUCTS AND RESOURCES

Original research Papers and Reviews on topics dealt within this repository are invited for publication in peer reviewed, quarterly journal (March, June, September and December), *Indian Journal of Natural Products and Resources* (Formerly known as *Natural Product Radiance*). For details visit: nopr@niscair.res.in. The papers may be sent to Dr (Mrs) Sunita Garg, Editor Periodicals Division, National Institute of Science Communication and Information Resources (NISCAIR), CSIR, Dr K. S. Krishnan Marg (Inside Pusa Campus). New Delhi-110012; Phone: (091)-11-25846001, (091)-11-25846304-07, Ext.258, 255. Fax: (091)-11-2584 7062. E-mail: sunitag@niscair.res.in; ijnpr@niscair.res.in

RAW MATERIALS HERBARIUM AND MUSEUM DELHI (RHMD)

Herbarium is a repository of dried specimens of plants collected from far and wide and is arranged in a systematic order. Plant specimens in herbaria and their raw material samples serve as reference materials for any plant-based research and as source materials for information on utilization, conservation, planning and management. The herbarium specimens have become resources for generating the profiles of chemical constituents and DNA fingerprinting. The herbarium specimens could be used as standard reference materials while identifying the plant specimens and the crude drug samples. Further, the herbaria could provide information on folk-lore, ethnomedicine or traditional medicine from which new medicines could be evolved.

Because of wide spread belief that herbal medicines are safer than synthetic drugs, demand for Indian medicinal plants has increased many fold in the national and international markets. Due to high demand but limited cultivation of medicinal plants in India, more than 95 per cent plants are being harvested from the wild. Consequently there is gap in demand and supply, therefore, the collectors and traders involved in commercialization of medicinal plants often mix other related plant materials to the genuine one or an altogether a distinct plant material is sold in the market in place of genuine one. Thus usage of such adulterated or spurious raw material for manufacturing medicine affects the efficacy of the finished product and could cause deleterious effect on human health.

Considering the demand for natural products including medicines and other products for various purposes, universities, colleges, institutes and various other R & D labs are focusing on research works especially pharmacological, phytochemical and ethnobotanical studies. First and foremost requisite for these findings is the correct identification of the plant/crude drug collection, preservation and identification. It is a fact that without correct name literature search is incomplete. Therefore, before starting actual R & D work, researchers need to have correct identification and nomenclature of the plant specimen for any novel finding or to validate an ethnobotanical report.

While starting the revised series of The Wealth of India-An Encyclopaedic Dictionary of Indian Raw Materials in 1978, National Institute of Science Communication and Information Resources (NISCAIR), formerly known as NISCOM, a constituent establishment of Council of Scientific Industrial Research (CSIR), has set up a Raw Materials Herbarium & Museum, housing authentic

samples of economically important raw materials of plant, animal and mineral origin of India as a whole, in one place, to disseminate and showcase knowledge on these resources through authenticated collection of samples, herbarium sheets borrowed and collected from fields from throughout India. It is open to the scientists, researchers, industries, entrepreneurs, traders, students and the public. **The NISCAIR Herbarium & Museum was assigned the acronym RHMD (Raw Materials Herbarium & Museum, Delhi) by the International Association for Plant Taxonomy and it appeared in the publication "Index Herbarium, New York, USA" (1990).** The RHMD houses over 8000 specimens comprising more than 5000 species of economic and medicinal plants of India and the Museum containing over 3500 samples of crude-drugs, animal and mineral specimens.

The facility backed up by the knowledge stored in the Wealth of India, is a veritable storehouse of information on the raw materials of India, and is a place useful to students to gain knowledge on economic biology and geology.