

Uttarakhand forest officers trained in willow cultivation

To promote the adoption of Willow cultivation for its multifarious uses, forest officers from the Uttarakhand Forest Department underwent a one-day training on 'Importance, cultivation and variety registration of willows (Salix species)' at the Dr YS Parmar University of Horticulture and Forestry (UHF), Nauni in the month of October.

The University's Department of Tree Improvement and Genetic Resources (TIGR) conducted the training, which was sponsored by the Conservator of Forests, Research Circle Haldwani. A group of 10 Forest Range Officers, Van Darogas and an Assistant Conservator of Forests took part the training. This was first training of its type on a single tree species. The tree has multiple uses in making household furniture, plyboard industry, fodder for goats and for making cricket bats. In addition, willow sawdust and logs are used in growing shitake mushroom, which fetches a handsome price in the market due to health benefits.



Different sessions including the importance and present scenario and variety registration by Dr Jaipal Sharma, lecture on wood properties by Dr Kulwant Rai, demonstration of growing shitake mushrooms on willow sawdust and logs by Dr Dharmesh Gupta were conducted during the training. Dr Sanjeev Thakur, Professor and Head, Department of TIGR also gave demonstrations on nursery management and propagation techniques of the tree species. During the valedictory session, Dr PK Mahajan, Dean College of

Forestry stressed on the need to establish a strong coordination between the forest department of the state and the university scientists so that the research can be properly implemented in the field. Dr Sanjeev Thakur urged the forest officials to ensure the farmers are made aware of the benefits of willow cultivation.

Willow (Salix species) is known for its multiple uses, but most of the indigenous willow species found in India lack quality wood characters suitable for industrial uses. Keeping in view its importance, the University has introduced several clones from different countries, which were screened in the nursery as well as well field conditions. The University has also undertaken wood samples of selected clones, which have been tested by different industries. Many hybrids have also been developed and screened, and some have been recommended for commercial plantation.