



Economically Useful Plants and Entrepreneurial Botany



Learning Objectives

The learner will be able to

- ❖ Acquire knowledge about origin, area of cultivation and uses of various food yielding plants.
- ❖ Describe the different spices and condiments and their uses.
- ❖ Elicit the uses of fibre, timbers, paper and dye yielding plants.
- ❖ Acquire knowledge about the active principles, chemical composition and medicinal uses of plants.
- ❖ Develop skill of mushroom cultivation, knowledge of SCP production and sea weed liquid fertilizers
- ❖ Gains knowledge of organic farming- bio fertilisers and bio pest repellants.
- ❖ Learn to make terrarium and bonsai
- ❖ Acquires knowledge of cultivation of medicinal plants.



Chapter outline

- 10.1 Food Plants
- 10.2 Spices and Condiments
- 10.3 Fibres
- 10.4 Timber
- 10.5 Latex
- 10.6 Pulp wood
- 10.7 Dyes
- 10.8 Cosmetics
- 10.9 Traditional systems of Medicines
- 10.10 Medicinal plants
- 10.11 Entrepreneurial Botany



The land and water of the earth sustain a vast assemblage of plants upon which all other living forms are directly or indirectly dependent. Pre-historic humans lived on berries, tubers, herbage, and the wild game which they collected and hunted that occupied whole of their time. Domestication of plants and animals has led to the production of surplus food which formed the basis for civilizations. Early civilization in different parts of the world has domesticated different species of plants for various purposes. Based on their utility, the economically useful plants are classified into food plants, fodder plants, fibre plants, timber plants, medicinal plants, and plants used in paper industries, dyes and cosmetics. Selected examples of economically important plants for each category are discussed in this chapter.

10.1 Food plants

Currently about 10,000 food plants are being used of which only around 1,500 species were brought under cultivation. However, food base of majority of the population depends only on three grass species namely rice, wheat and maize.

10.1.1 Cereals

The word cereal is derived from Ceres, which according to the Roman mythology denotes “**Goddess of agriculture**”. All cereals are members of grass family (**Poaceae**) that are grown for their edible starchy seeds. The prominence of cereals as food plants is due to the following attributes: