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Seminar on sandalwood today

Special Correspondent

BANGALORE: The Institute of Wood Science and Technology (IWST) is organising a three-day international seminar on sandalwood titled 'Sandalwood: Current Trends and Future Prospects' at J.N. Tata Auditorium, Indian Institute of Sciences, here in Bangalore from Tuesday.

Delegates

About 130 delegates from abroad, where different species of sandalwood is grown, will participate. This includes countries such as Sri Lanka, Australia, Fiji, Hawaii, and Pacific Islands, V. Ramakantha, Director, IWST, said in a statement here on Tuesday.

The key issues to be discussed at the seminar include importance of conserving sandalwood and elements needed to conserve them in natural habitats.

Repositories

Karnataka and Tamil Nadu are the largest repositories of sandalwood in India, while the States of Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Goa and Maharashtra are part of the natural habitat, Dr. Ramakantha said. The delegates will visit the sandalwood oil factory in Mysore as part of the field trips, and interact with the farmers, artisans and other stakeholders. The event would be part of the year-long platinum jubilee celebrations of the institute.

Governor H.R. Bhardwaj, Union Minister for Petroleum and Natural Gas M. Veerappa Moily, Minister for Forests and Environment B. Ramanath Rai, and S.S. Garbyal, Director-General of Forests and Special Secretary, Government of India, will attend



Visitors at a sandalwood products exhibition organis the Indian institute of Science in Bangalore on Wedo DH PHOTO

State losing sandalwood trees to smuggling. nandicrafts

BANGALORE, DHNS: Kar nataka may lose its reputa tion as the Land of Sandal-wood. For, the number of sandalwood trees has re-

wood. For, the number of sandalwood trees has reduced over the years.

Smuggling and increasing demand for sandalwood for handicrafts are the main reasons, experts and Forest department officials said. The decrease in sandalwood trees has led to rise in sale of fake wood, they said at the two-day international seminar on "Sandalwood: Current Trends and Future Prospects", organised by the Indian Council of Forestry, Research and Education and the Institute of Wood Science and Technology (IWST).

Octogenarian sandalwood researcher R A Srimathi said the demand for sandalwood handicrafts and smuggling was equally responsible for the fall in the number of trees. Over the years, the tree girth had also reduced drastically. Earlier, the diameter was not less than 60cm; now finding one with a 30cm girth is also difficult. There are no more old trees left. All have been somggled or felled for commercial use.

Exploitation by the govern-

Exploitation by the government departments for gifting and stocking them is unother cause, she added.

Srimathl, who is working on the history of sandalwood, its use in temples and for religious purposes, said she was search-

ing for trees which yielded six per cent oil, instead of those that yield hardly three per cent. Srimathi was felicitated for her contribution to research on sandalwood since 1960 and her study on "Chemical Control of Spike Diseases and Unique Techniques."

IWST Director V Ramakan-tha said sandalwood planta

the said sandalwood planta-tions in private areas had not increased due to lack of aware-ness. IWST is working with farmers, training them to grow other tree species along with sandalwood, so that farmers have alternate crops, while sandalwood trees are preserved and the area under sandalwood cultivation increases. The agro-forestry model is being adopt-ed to increase sandalwood

trees, he added.
Governor H R Bhardwaj said that while sandalwood should be used for handicrafts, the government should draw a line

government should draw a line on how much to use and preserve.

Union Minister for Environment and Forests Veerappa Moily proposed the nationalisation of sandalwood and giving it the status of 'royal tree'. He said he would write to Chief Fle said he would write to Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and the Karnataka forest minister suggesting that all government offices, guesthouses and homes have sandalwood trees, as it was part of the State's cultural heritage and the pride of Kannadigas. machigans.

தினகரன்

அலுவலகங்களில்

பாருட்கள் பயக்

பெங்களூர், பிப். 27: மத்திய, WIND MAR MENDINGEN களில் சந்தன மரத்தில் தவர ரிக்கப்பட்ட கலை பொருட்களை பயன்படுத்த வேண்டும் என்று மத்திய ОИС Сутови допр அமைச்சர் எம்.வீரப். பமோப்பி தெரிவித்தார்.

பெங்களூரில் தேற்று இந்திய மர அரிவியல் சம் கம் சார்பில் சந்தல மரத்தை பாதுகாத்தல் மற்றும் பயன் போடு என்ற தலைப்பில் தேசிய கருத்த ரங்கம் நடத்தது. அதில் மரம் பாதுகாப்பு குறித்து விழிப்புணர்வு ம்லர் வெளி மிடப்பட்டது.

இவ்விழாவில் கலந்து கொண்டு ஆளுதர் எச். ஆர்.பரத்வாற் பேக weddo, somegygysig நாம் முக்கியத்தும் கொடுக் காமல் போனால், எதிர்கா gewer siglis Cyflidi.

மக்கள் தொகை அடுகரித்து உயிரினங்கள் பனியாகும்

வீரப்பமொய்லி வலியுறுத்தல்



 பெங்களூரில் நேற்று இந்திய மர அரிவியல் சங்கம் சார்பில் சந்தன மரத்தை பாதகாத்தல் மற்றும் பயன்பாடு என்ற தலைப்பில் நடந்த தேசிய கருத்தரங்கில் மரம் பாதுகாப்பு குறித்து விறிப்புணர்வு மலரை ஆகுநர் பரத்வாழ், விரப்பமொய்கி வெளிறிட்டனர்.

லத்தில் பெரிய ஆபத் வருகிறது. மறு புறம் குழ்நிலை ஏற்படும். Диров Сопрумы это பட்டது உலகில் ஒருபக்கம். இயறகை சிற்றம் ஏற்பட்டு பயன்படுத்துகிறார்கள்.

மையாத ஒன்றாகிவிட்ட சத்தனம் நமது இந்திய சத்தன மர வளர்சியை லிடத்தில் உள்ளது. 18ம் மாநில அரசு அலுவலகம் உத்தரகாண்ட மாரி மாகி வருகிறது. வனத்தை கலாச்சாரத்தின் முக்கிய முன்னே டுத்து செல்ல நுற்றாண்டில் ±ர்தாட களில் சந்தன மரம் லத்தில் சுற்றுச்சூழனை பாறுகாக்காமல் விட்டால் பங்கு வகிக்கிறது. உலக வேண்டும் நாட்டிற்கு சத் காவீல் ஆட்சி நடத்திய கொண்டு தயாரிக்கப்பட்ட பாதுகாக்காமல் வீட் யழை, சுத்தமான சுர்ந்று அமை நிக்காக நடத் தடைமரத்தின் தேவை அடு இப்புகல்தான், சத்தமைரம் பொருடக்கை பயன்படுத்த டதால், இயற்கை சேற்றத் கிடைக்காயல் போகும்.இத தப்படும் யாகம், தேறாமன் கம் உண்ணது. அதை எவ் வணிர்ப்பதை ஊக்கப்படுத் வேண்டும். இது தொடர் இந்த ஆனாகும் நிலை ஏற் னால் பெரிய எவில் களில் சந்தன கட்டை கெல்லாம் பயிர் செய்ய தினார். மாநிலத்தில் உள்ள பாக விரைவில் முதல்வர் முடியுமோ அதை செய்ய வனபகுடுவில் சத்தன மரம். இத்தராமையாவுக்கு கடிதம் மக்கள் வாழ்வில் இன்றி வேண்டும். வீரப்பன கும்ப வளர்க்கும் இட்டம் மும் எழுதவேன் என்றார்.

போது தர்ன் மத்திய

GETTAGGET.

ரின் செய்வால் சத்துன் மரம் கொண்டு கலை பொருட் அழி வின் பாதையை கன் தயாரிக்கும் மையங்கள் தோக்கு சென்றது. தமது அமைத்தேன். அவை தற் நாட்டில் தற்போது சந்தன போதும் சிறப்பாக இயங்க wyżyda Czone zowan wykrzy.

கவுள்ளது அதை அடுக மாதியத்தில் சத்தன

storget.

லால் நடிகர் ராஜ்குமார் வீச்சில் மேற்கொள்ளப்

மாநிலத்தில் சந்தனமரத் அமைச்சராக இருந்தேன். இற்கு ராஜ மரிவாதை setung estiluting eiter Gerifeelius Spel grie டக அரகமுயற்றித்தியாது, மாறில அமைச்சராக எனது பங்களிப்பை இருந்த 1970ம் ஆண்டு களில் மாநிலம் முழுவதும் Aguicia Guriag 810 12 Gr. Essilio aggar with

ரிக்க வேண்டும். அதற்கான காடுகளை அழிந்த வீரப் முயந்சியை வனத்துறை பனை பிடிப்பதற்காக மேற்கோள்ள வேஸ்டும் அமைக்கப்பட்ட அடுரடிப டையில் சினிவாசன் மத்திய அமைச்சர் போன்ற போலீன் அதிகா பொய்லி பேசுகையில், கன் ரிகள் தயது உயிரை கொடுத் வட மண்ணை சந்தன கடு தனர். அவர்களின் இவர என்ற பெகுமையுடன் கத்தால் இன்றும் அழைக்கிறோம். காரணம் மாநிலத்தில் சத்தனமரம் நாட்டில் சந்தன மரம் பயிர் உள்ளது. இதை மேம்படுத்த செய்யதில் சாதாடகம் முத வேண்டுமானால், மத்திய

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ಸುಪ್ರಭತಾ

ನಿಮ್ಮ ಜೀವನದ ಅಧ್ಯಾಯ 1 ಅನ್ನು ಇನ್ನೊಬ್ಬರ ಜೀವಸದ ಆಧ್ಯಾಯ 20ಕ್ಕೆ ಹೋಲಿಕೆ ಮಾಡಿಕೊಳ್ಳಬೇಡಿ. ಏಕೆಂದರೆ පක්ර ෙස්සේ පදනුරෝ 1වේ ನಿಮ್ಮಂತೆಯೇ ಇರುತ್ತಾರೆ. ಆಧ್ಯಾಯ 20ಕ್ಕೆ ಬರುವ ಹೊಕ್ಕಿಗೆ ಯಶಸ್ಸು ಕೆಂಡಿರುತ್ತಾರೆ ಎಂಬುದು ನೆನಪಿರಲಿ,

ೀಗಂಧ ಸೇರಿ ಅರಣ್ಯ ರಕ್ಷಣೆ ಇಂದಿನ ಅಗತ್ಯ: ಭಾರದ್ರಾ

धेवतिन देश ದಂತೆ ಎಲ್ಲಾ ರೀತಿಯ ಅರಣ್ಯವನ್ನು ರಕ್ಕಿಸಿಕೊಳ್ಳಬೇಕಿದೆ. ಇಲ್ಲವಾದಲ್ಲಿ ಉತ್ತರಾಖಂಡದಲ್ಲಾದಂತಹ ಪರಿಸರ ಸಂಬಂಧಿ ಸಮಸ್ಯೆಗಳು ತಲೆದೋರ ಲಹುದು ಎಂದು ರಾಜ್ಯವಾಲ ಎಚ್. _ಆರ್. ಭಾರದ್ಯಾಪ್ ಎಡ್ಡಬಸಿದ್ದಾರೆ.

कार विकास, उठ्युक्त रहरू ವತಿಯಿಂದ ಭಾರತೀಯ ವಿಜ್ಞಾನ - ಸಂಸಯಲಿ ಬುದವಾರ ನಡೆದ ವರು ಮಾತನಾಡಿದರು.

ಮಾಲೆಗಳು ಎಂದರು.

ತಿರುವ ಈ ಮಾಲೆಗಳು ನೋಡಲು ಕರಕುಶಲವಸ್ತುಗಳನ್ನು ರಾಜ್ಯದ ಎಲ್ಲಾ ವಿಶ್ವವಾತಿ ತಂದುಕೊಟ್ಟಿದೆ. ಕನ್ನಡ ವಸ್ತುಗಳನ್ನು ಎಲ್ಲಾ ಸರ್ಕಾರಿ ಕಚೇ ರಾಜ್ಯಪಾಲರು ಕ್ಯಾಪಿಸಿದರು.

■ಆರಣ ಸಂರಕಣೆಗೆ ಮುಂದಾಗದಿ ದರೆ ಉತರಾಖಂಡದಲ್ಲಾದಂಥ ಪರಿಸರ ಸಂಬಂದಿ ಸಮಸೆ

■ರಾಜದಲ್ಲಿ ಶ್ರೀಗಂಧ ಅರಸರ ಕಾಲದಿಂದಲೂ ಮಹತ ಪಡೆದಿದ್ದು, ವಿಶ್ವವಾತಿ ತಂದುಕೊಟ್ಟಿದೆ: ಮೊಯಿ

ತ್ರೀಗಂಧದ ಈಗಿನ ಸಿತ್ತಿ ಮತ್ತು ಶ್ರೀಗಂಧದ ಮಾಲೆಯಂತೆ ಕಂ-ಮುಂದಿನ ಭವಿಷ್ಠ ಕುರಿತ ಅಂತಾರಾ ಡರೂ ಸುವಾಸನೆ ಮಾತ್ರ ಇಲ್ಲ ಷ್ಟೀಯ ವಿಚಾರ ಸಂಕಿರಣದಲ್ಲಿ ಆ ಸಾಮಾನ್ಯ ಒಂದು ಶ್ರೀಗಂಧ ಮಾಲೆಗೆ ₹3000ವರೆಗೂ ಬೆಟ್ಟ ಆಗುತ್ತದೆ. ತುತ್ತು. ಆದರೆ ಈಗ ತ್ರೀಗಂಧದ ನಕಲಿ ಕಡೇರಿಯಲ್ಲಿವೆ ಎಂದು ಹೇಳಿದರು.

ಸರ್ಕಾರಿ ಕಚೇರಿಗಳಲಿಡಿ: ನಾಡಿನ



ವಿಚಾರ ಸಂಕರಣದಲ್ಲಿ ಕೇಂದ್ರ ಪರಿಸರ ಮತ್ತು ಆರಣ್ಣ ಸಚಿವ ಎಂ.ವೀರಪ್ಪ ಮೊಯ್ಲ ಮೂಲಕ ಮರ ವಿಜ್ಞಾನ, ತಂತ್ರಜ್ಞಾನ ಶ್ರೀಗಂಧದ ಭವಿಷ್ಠ ಎಂಬ ಕತಿ ಬಿಡುಗಡೆಗೊಳಿಸಿದರು. ರಾಜ್ಯಪಾಲ ಎಚ್.ಆರ್. ಇತ್ತೀಚೆಗೆ ಎಲ್ಲಾ ಸಭೆ, ಸಮಾರಂ ಅದರೆ ನನಗೆ ಶುಭ ಹಾರೈಸಲು ಭಾರದಾಜ್, ಡಾ.ಎಸ್.ಎಸ್.ಗಾರ್ಬೆಲ್, ಡಾ.ಎ.ರಮಾಕಾಂತ್ ಹಾಜರಿದರು. ಭಗಳಲ್ಲೂ ತ್ರೀಗಂಧದ ಮಾಲೆ ಬಳ ಬರುವ ಅನೇಕ ಮಂದಿ ತರುವ ಸಚಿವರ ಕಚೇರಿ, ನಿವಾಸ ಹಾಗೂ ನಾಡು ಗಂಧದ ಬೀಡು, ಚಂದರ ಸಲಾಗುತ್ತದೆ. ನಿಜಕ್ಕೂ ಇದು ಗಂಧದ ಮಾಲೆಗಳು ನಕಲಿ, ಅಂದರೆ ಕೇವಲ ಎಲ್ಲಾ ಸರ್ಕಾರಿ ಕಚೇರಿಗಳಲ್ಲೂ ಇರಿಸ ನಾಡು ಎಂದು ಹಿರಿಮೆ ಗಳಿಸಲು ಪರಿಸರ ತಜ್ಜೆ ಆರ್.ಎ.್ಫರೀಮತಿ ಅ ಮಾಲೆ ಆಗಿದ್ದರೆ ಶ್ರೀಗಂಧಕ್ಕೆ ಉತ್ತಮ ₹100ಕ್ಕೆ ಸಿಗುವ ನಕಲಿ ಮಾಲೆಗಳು. ಬೇಕು ಎಂದು ಕೇಂದ್ರ ಪರಿಸರ ಮತ್ತು ಶ್ರೀಗಂಧವೇ ಕಾರಣ. ಇದನ್ನು

ಇತ್ತೀಚೆಗೆ ಹೆಚ್ಚು ಬಳಕೆಯಾಗು ಹಿರಿಮೆಯ ಪ್ರತೀಕವಾದ ಶ್ರಿಗಂಧದ ಕಾಲದಿಂದಲೂ ಮಹತ್ತ ಪಡೆದಿದ್ದು, ಮಸ್ತುಗಳ ಬಳಕೆ ಹೆಚ್ಚಾಗಬೇಕು. ಇಂಥ ಪ್ರಬಂಧಗಳನ್ನು ಮಂಡಿಸಿದ್ದಾರೆ ಎಂದು

ಹೇಳಿದ್ದಾರೆ.

ರೀತಿಯ ಉತ್ಯೇಜನ ಇದೆ ಎನ್ನಬಹು ಇಂಥ ಒಂದು ಟನ್ ಮಾಲೆಗಳು ನನ್ನ ಅರಣ್ಯ ಸಚಿವ ಎಂ.ವೀರಪ್ಪ ಮೊಯ್ಲ ಉಳಿಸಿ, ಬೆಳೆಸಲು ಇಂದು ಡ್ರೀಗಂಧ ಹಾಗೂ ಅದರ ಉತ್ಪನ್ನಗಳನ್ನು ಸಂರ ಅಭಿವೃದ್ಧಿ ಬಗ್ಗೆ ಸಂಶೋಧನೆ ನಡೆಸು ರಾಜ್ಯದ ಶ್ರೀಗಂಧ ಆರಸರ ಕ್ಷಿಸಬೇಕು. ಶ್ರೀಗಂಧದ ಕರಕುಶಲ ತ್ರಿದ್ದು, ಸುಮಾರು 100ಕ್ಕೂ ಹೆಚ್ಚು

ರಿಗಳಲ್ಲೂ ಇರಿಸುವಂತೆ ಎಲ್ಲರಗೂ ಸೂಚನೆ ನೀಡುವಂತೆ ಮುಖ್ಯಮಂತಿ, ಸಿದ್ದರಾಮಯ್ಯ ಅವರಿಗೆ ಪತ್ರ ಬರೆ ಯುವುದಾಗಿ ಅವರು ವಿವರಿಸಿದರು.

क्षितंवपर्वं ध्रेष्ट्, कंप्यून ಕಾಲದಲ್ಲಿ ಹೆಚ್ಚು ಆದ್ಯತೆ ಸಿಕ್ಕಿತ್ತು ಆಗಿನಿಂದಲೂ ಕನ್ನಡ ನಾಡು <u>ರ್ಜಿಗಂಧದ ಬೀಡಾಗಿದೆ. ಇದನು</u> ಡಾ. ರಾಜ್ ಕುಮಾರ್ ಗಂಧದಗುಡಿ ಎಂಬ ಸಿನಿಮಾವರ್ನ್ನೆ ಮಾಡಿ ಅದರಲ್ಲಿ ನಾಡಿನ ಗಂಧದ ಹಿರಿಮೆ, ಗರಿಯನ್ನು ಸಾರಿದ್ದಾರೆ. ಇದನ್ನು ಉಳಿಸಿ, ವೆಳಿಸುವ ಸಂಸ್ಥೆ ದೇಶಕ್ಕೇ ಕೀರ್ತಿ ತರುತಿದೆ ಎಂದು ಮೊಯಿ ಹೇಳಿದರು.

ಇದೇವೇಳೆ ಹಿರಿಯ ಸಂಶೋದಕ್ಕಿ ವರನ್ನು ಗೌರವಿಸಲಾಯಿತು. 83ರ ಇಳ ವಯಸ್ತಿನಲ್ಲೂ ಆವರು ತ್ರೀಗಂಧದ



Free up sandalwood trade, experts tell govt

Grow The Tree In Every Courtyard, Is Moily's Advice

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bangalore: Is there a crisis in Gandhada Gudi (temple of sandalwood) as Karnataka prides itself? Experts at an international seminar here on Wednesday believe there is.

They cited the increasing instances of smuggling of sandalwood and the sharp dip in its production to back their crisis theory. The seminar 'Sandalwood: Current Trends and Future Prospects' was organized by the Institute of Wood Science and Technology (IWST).

Where did things go wrong? "State . ownership was a cause of concern. De smuggled out. Farmers initially vidual entrepreneurs and corporate spite opening it up for farmers to grow this commercially-profitable species, bigarea of concern," said HS Anantha Ramakantha, director, IWST. Padmanabha, forestry consultant.



EFFORTS LAUDED: RA Shrimathi (C), a retired scientist from the institute of Wood Science and Technology, was felicitated at the seminar on sandalwood, in Bangalore on Wednesday. The event discussed the sharp dip in the production of sandalwood

prohibition on free trade has been a lies with the state's policies," said V

sold in kilograms, sandalwood in its tiepolicy in 2001, and Tamil Nadu did natural habitat is always a plant. Be- so in 2002, liberalizing sandalwood the rules must be farmer friendly.

struggled to grow sandalwood over a bodies. Yet, they retained control at height of 1 foot, but now they're culti- all levels. Farmers in Karnataka apart from forest lands since 2001, the varing it successfully. The problem can sell their produce only to government agencies.

The experts hoped the Sandalwood Significantly, the government of Protection Bill, the draft of which was policies," said Moily, The only tree in the world which is Karnataka retracted this monopolis placed before the Centre in August

Don't mix politics, preservation

We are examining the Kasturirangan report. Do not mix politics with the preservation issue. The Western Ghats has to be preserved and forest preservation cannot be compromised, but at the same time we have to take into account the apprehensions of people from the six affected states. We cannot take away livelihood options of the locals there.

M Veerappa Molly on implementation of the Kasturirangan report; the minister didn't give any timeframe for implementation

Union minister for petroleum and natural gas, environment and forests M Veerappa Moily said he would write to the state chief minister to restore sandalwood's 'royal' status.

Sandalwood needs to be grown in every courtyard in Karnataka if it has to be revived, the minister said. "Sandalwood policies have been liberalized but still not taken us anywhere. We need to take a relook at the existing

He pointed our that in recent years, 2012, will make a difference. They felt Kerala has been able to successfully arrest sandalwood smuggling and

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Scent of sandalwood, oil no more fragrant

Inconsistent supply, rising demand push up prices

ANIL URS

Barryphore, March 3

Prices of sandalwood and oil have increased sharply in the domestic market due to inconsistent supply and high demand.

Prices of sandalwood as well as its oil have increased 30 per cent between 2007 and 2012, according to industry experts.

"This spurt in prices is due to sharp decline in production in the country. From a production level of 3,000 tonnes in 1960 and 70s, it has declined to 400 tonnes currently," said HS Anantha Padmanabha, forestry consultant and former scientist at the Indian Wood Science and Technology (IWST).

As for the sandal oil output, it is

around 20 tonnes currently compared with 150 tonnes during the 1970s. The entire production is consumed by State-owned enterprises, leaving the private trade and industry to look for import to meet their requirements.

This spurt in ptices has resulted in loss of business for small traders in Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Kerala and some have even shut shop.

VSoundara Rajan, scientist at IWST, said: There is has been a sudden intrease in import of sandalwood oil. Current imports (2012-13) are averaging at around 30,000 kg which are about 10 times more than what it was five years ago. Most of the imports are for internal consumption or re-exports."

The price of sandalwood at various Government auctions is around ₹75 lakh (\$125,000) a tonne and the price for sandalwood oil is quoting ₹1.35 lakh (\$2,200) a kg.

"Price may continue to rise by 6 per



SWAPAN PHOTOGRAPHY SHUTTERSTOCK

cent annually. A few plantations, both in the government and private sectors, are keen to take up sandalwood cultivation using new technology," said Anantha Padmanabha.

"This new cultivation pattern is sustainable and may not lead to fluctuations in prices in the year to come," he said. Echoing a similar sentiment, RK Upadhyay, chief conservator of forests, Tamil Nadu, said urgent legislation is required to allow private individuals and farmers to take up sandalwood cultivation.

Need for laws

Southern States, where agro-climatic conditions are favourable to grow sandalwood, have stringent forest acts/rules in place to protect sandalwood.

But the laws have not been implemented properly and stocks have dwindled to mere saplings of less than 10-15 centimetre girth.

*Since sandalwood trees are illegally cut and removed from lorest areas, these regulations are of limited purpose.

Now, one of the best options is to analyse these regulations and amend them to help the farmers to cultivate sandalwood in their land, harvest and trade," he said.



The woman who rejuvenated sandalwood trees in S India

RA Srimathi Brought 79 Saplings From Elsewhere In The Country

Saswati Mukherjee B | THN

porting a big bindi and an ordinary sari, hers is an aura hard to miss. Sandalwood researcher RA Srimathi's re-

lentless service is deeply rooted, literally. Srimathi brought 79 'outstanding' sandalwood saplings from different parts of the country for planting in Peninsular India, the natural habitat for these fragrant woods. That was also the time when spike disease threatened the abundantly thriving sandalwood trees, resulting in a huge loss of this precious species. Srimathi's endeavour was responsible for a turnaround in the fortunes of sandalwood plantations in the region.

"We were looking to augment tree plantation and travelled all over the country-from Kangra Valley in Himachal Pradesh, to Rajasthan and Parasnath Hill in the then Bihar to get quality sandalwood trees. We selected 79 trees and planted them along the Deccan Plateau. This drive increased the Sandalwood tree count in South India," recalls 83-year-old Srimathi.

Sandalwood tree twigs brought from other states were grafted with the saplings to get a good generation of trees. There was a huge nursery at Hoskote where grafting happened. The grafted twigs were

put in the clonal banks and the rest were sent to clonal seed orchards.

"The clonal seed orchards were spread across. Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka. After

successful grafting, we allowed them to pollinate the natural way," says HD Kulkarni, Srimathi's Junior In the project. "We were looking at improving the quality of seeds dramatically and managed to achieve just that. For the next decade



SPECIAL BOND: Srimathi has had a lasting relationship with these precious trees

things were very good and the number of Sandalwood trees surged. No one took it

up in as massive a way as Srimathi did," says Kulkarni

Looking back: Born on May 4, 1930 in Mysore. Srimathi started her career in 1959 as an UGC re-

search fellow in Central College, Bangalore. She then joined as a research assistant in Forest Research Laboratory. Bangalore (a unit of FRI, Dehradun and the present-day Institute of Wood Science and Technology) in 1960, and went

ON HER MIND

The gradual dip in sandalwood production in the recent years worries this green warrior. Had it been during her time, she would have traveled all over and taken necessary steps to successfully intervene. "Good quality sandalwood produced in bulk was always our pride. But today, so many threats loom large. Besides disease, smuggling and government policies need to be dealt with, "she rues.

on to become a senior research officer (special grade).

Eventually, when the Sandalwood Research Centre was established in Bangalore in 1977, Srimathi was appointed the head of the department of genetics and tree breeding. During her tenure there, she notably contributed to propagate this prized species of wood.

Her unique contribution was the chemical control of spike disease through infusion(grafting) techniques. Her search for spike disease resistant trees took her to the nook and corner of North India where she found the 79 'outstanding trees". Her most successful project, perhaps, was the first sandalwood clonal seed orchard established in Nallal, Hoskote, Bangalore

Srimathi retired in 1988 but continued to keep her scientific quest alive, this time as a forest consultant promoting plantation of teak and sandalwood in the country.

Look at her energy and you know age is merely a number for this octogenarian. "At present, I'm collecting information on various species of trees which yield aromatic oils and are used to make perfumes and medicines," she says. And no sooner she collects the details, she'll start penning her debut book