

Prospects

Exploiting potential of medicinal plants in arid region

Though number of medicinal plants are in cultivation in Rajasthan, only few medicinal plants like Isabgol, Ashwagandha, Sonamukhi, Opium Poppy, Safed musli and Mehndi could get a sizeable area. As far as the growth of area, production and yield of medicinal and aromatic crops in various districts of Rajasthan is concerned, it may be noted that Jalore district occupied the first position in terms of area under medicinal and aromatic crops. During 2015-16, area under cultivation of MAPs in Rajasthan was 370 thousand ha as against the total area of 634 thousand of all India average with the production of 190 thousand MT as compared to 1030.85 thousand tonnes of the country. The annual growth rate of area under medicinal and aromatic crops was highest (66.6%) in Rajsamand district during the last decade followed by Hanumangarh (50.8%) and 37.7% in Jaipur district. However, the annual growth rate of production of medicinal and aromatic crops was highest in Baran (72.6%), followed by Udaipur (48.8%) and Jhalawar district (20.9%). The annual growth rate of area and yield of medicinal and aromatic crops was lowest in Bharatpur (-96.1%) and Sri Ganganagar (-33.8%) districts, respectively.

RAJASTHAN has the highest area under medicinal and aromatic crops with a share of 56%, followed by Uttar Pradesh (25%). In case of production, Madhya Pradesh ranks first with a share of 44% and Rajasthan ranks second with a share of 19%. The total exports of herbal raw drugs, including extracts is estimated 1,34,500 tonnes, while consumption is at 1,95,000 tonnes. Rajasthan is quite rich in diversity of medicinal plants. The herbs are mostly found growing in wild that forms the base of various drugs being extracted from them and used in different systems of medicine. It has 1,911 species of medicinal plants. Of them, only 205 are major medicinal plants.

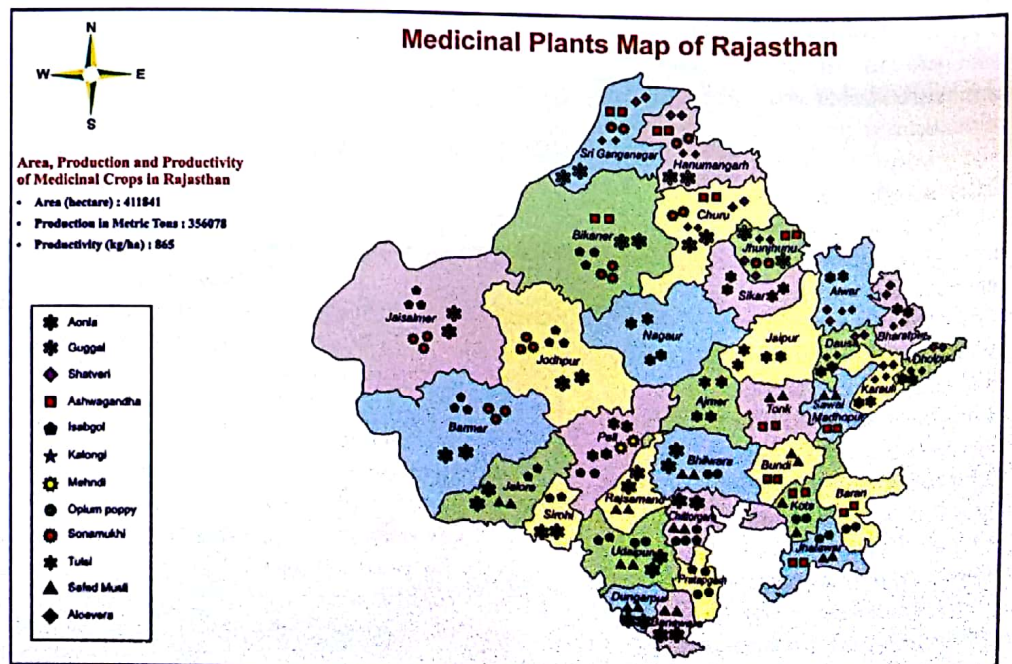
About 31 species of medicinal plants are suitable for cultivation in the state. On the basis of suitability and natural occurrence of medicinal plants, the six agro climatic regions have been identified (Table 1).

The major nine medicinal crops that are cultivated in Rajasthan is given in Table 2. Over the last one decade the area under cultivation has substantially increased for the crops like Isabgol, Kalongi, Opium, Sonamukhi, Tulsi,

and Aloe vera, whereas there were reduction in area for Ashwagandha and safed musli.

MEDICINAL PLANTS

Rajasthan has vast potential of export of medicinal plant produce, e.g. isabgol, mehndi (Henna), senna, poppy seed etc. Rajasthan produces 80% of total produce of Isabgol in India and the state is also the largest producer of henna. The state presents multiple investment



Source: Department of Horticulture, Govt. of Rajasthan, Jaipur

