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Marihal Bamboo Has Potential

by M Venkatesh

Bangalore: Scientists of the city-based Indian Institute of Wood Science and Technology (IWST) successfully achieved the standardisation of tissue culture protocols for eight high potential bamboo species and simple macro-propagation protocol for another two.

They have now decided to popularise these species among stakeholders.

Dr Sham Viswanath from IWST told Express that among the 10 species, the scientists found D Stocksil or Marihal bamboo, a multipurpose species endemic to central Western Ghats. According to him, it has a great potential since it grows in both semi-arid as well as humid tropical conditions.

He said the IWST has an assemblage of germplasm bank of candidate plus clumps of D.stocksil also known as Marihal bamboo.

According to Vishwanath, this species is found ideal for industrial application and furniture making. Its shoots are edible too.

According to him, Marihal

has high economic, ecological, social and commercial importance on par with any other timber species.

He said this non-thorny bamboo species with loosely spaced solid erect culms ranging from 30-50 mm diameter, will provide flexibility in harvesting and easy management.

This species, which is mainly found in central Western Ghats from Kasargod in Kerala to Ratnagiri in Maharashtra, is a valuable multipurpose bamboo used as substitute for cane/rattan in bamboo-based furniture.

"It can also produce fresh edible vegetable shoots and its culms are for scaffolding and structural uses," he said.

In the last decade, according to him, the IWST undertook 10 projects on bamboo funded by the Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education (ICFRE) and other external agencies. He said recently the IWST's field station at Gotipura celebrated the World Bamboo Day to which farmers, furniture-makers and other stakeholders were invited.