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Horticulture Crops and their Beneficiary Routes in India

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Opinion Article

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ABOUT THE STUDY

The cultivation of plants in the landscape for decorative or practical purposes is known as amenity horticulture, often known as "landscape" or "environmental" horticulture. This industry uses more than 60,000 genotypes, representing a wide variety of plant species. It includes several types of green landscapes, including turf for sports and recreation, street or garden trees, urban forests, shrubs, and herbaceous plants, as well as annual 'bedding' plants for borders, green walls, and roofs, and planned 'naturalised' meadows. Initially, amenity horticulture focused mostly on the aesthetic elements of green space, but this is changing as more and more of its use is determined by the functions (eco-system services) that are offered by such vegetation and associated landscapes.

This includes chances for improving "sense of place," human health, and well-being, as well as contributions to urban cooling, biodiversity conservation, air pollution mitigation, precipitation runoff and flash flooding reduction, and air pollution mitigation. India's food, nutritional, and economic security all depend on horticulture crops.

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Research on the phytobiomes of horticulture crops highlights the significance of innate microbial communities that regulate plant growth and health. The structure, makeup, and dynamics of horticulture-related microbial communities are all poorly understood, as is the role played by cultured and uncultured community members in the uptake of nutrients, stimulation of growth, resistance to pathogens, and tolerance to abiotic stress (heat, drought, and salinity).

Modern molecular techniques must be used to investigate the functional mechanisms of microbial communities due to the rising need for agricultural production. Recent improvements in molecular methodologies, including DNA fingerprinting, sequencing techniques, microarrays, DNA barcoding, metagenomics, and DNA/RNA probe technology, have the ability to examine microbial communities and provide the chance to better understand and utilize this resource. This chapter examines, using cutting-edge molecular technologies, the significance and functions of horticultural crops related to microbial ecosystems. It talks about the difficulties in deciphering the intricate web of genetic, microbial, and metabolic relationships among horticulture crops and members of the microbial community.

The volume of production, specialization, and commercialization of horticulture set it apart from agriculture. In industrialized civilizations, agriculture plays a role in supplying food to sizable metropolitan populations. In some ways, it is horticulture in reverse. It entails farming large fields, typically with a monocarp (all wheat, potatoes, beans, etc.), as opposed to horticulturists' gardens, which typically feature intercropping, the blending of several different crops rather than their segregation in separate rows or plots, for reasons that are sound ecologically (e.g., pest and disease control, maximizing nutrient and water availability, increasing photosynthetic efficiency, exploiting micro environmental variations).

Production methods used in agriculture are heavily mechanized, whereas horticulture communities rely more on labor from humans and animal power. Farmers in agricultural systems primarily focus on the industrial-scale production of a small number of goods for the market, barely meeting their own subsistence needs. They engage in agribusiness, a form of intensive farming that makes extensive use of inputs to increase yields. These inputs are typically purchased off-farm and are made industrially (inorganic fertilizers, biocides, etc.). In urban-industrial societies, the term "horticulture" has a very different meaning, which can mislead the unwary. It describes the intensive production of commercial growers of high-value crops such early vegetables, salads, and flowers, frequently under synthetic glasshouse conditions.