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## 3-days training prog on 'Cultivation of Immunity Boosting Horticultural Species' concludes

**PORT BLAIR, AUG 5/-** A three days long training programme on 'Cultivation of Immunity Boosting Horticultural Species' was conducted during August 1 to 3, 2022 at ICAR-Central Island Agricultural Research Institute, Port Blair as a part of celebration of "Azadika Amrut Mahotsav". Practical skills are one of the crucial factors that determine the success of a venture. In order to impart hands on experience on scientific cultivation of various plants to the island stakeholders, the programme was organized under the NABARD funded project on Urban Horticulture. During the event, various theory, practical and demonstration sessions were conducted to make it an interactive one. The programme started with watering of vitamin C rich West Indian cherry plant to recognize the importance of immunity boosting plants in this era of COVID-19 pandemic. To make the participants aware about the diversity of native horticultural flora of the islands, Dr. Pooja Bohra, Coordinator of the programme explained in detail various species being multiplied at the

Horticultural Plants Propagation Unit of the Institute. An exhibition of various inputs required for urban horticulture was also organized in which the participants were made aware about the utility and significance of these inputs. A presentation on Scientific Techniques of Garden Management was given by Dr. Ajit A. Waman, Co-Coordinator of the programme to provide an overview to the participants. The importance of promoting local species and strategies for their marketing by island youth were discussed in detail.

Exposure visits were made to the experimental fields of various local fruits, exotic fruits, tree spices, rhizomatous spices, aromatic crops and plantation based cropping systems. During these visits, the participants were educated about crop specific management practices. Considering the need to use the improved technologies in production system, trainees were apprised about the cultivation of various crops under shade net house and polyhouse conditions apart from use of drip irrigation, overhead

sprinkler irrigation, misting and weed mat. During the practical sessions, hands on training were provided on preparation and application of plant protection chemicals, nursery raising of various plants by means of herbaceous cuttings, softwood cutting, semi-hardwood cutting and air layering. Further, techniques of grafting and bush pepper cultivation were demonstrated. Cinnamon being an important but neglected spice of the islands, requires promotion and hence, the technique of scientific harvesting was practically taught to the participants.

Participants were also taken to the NABARD funded Institute Demonstration Unit on Urban Horticulture, wherein various immunity boosting fruits, spices and medicinal plants have been housed. Dr. Pooja Bohra elaborated on various methods of cultivation of these plants in different growing containers, vertical models and substrates. She guided the participants on selection of appropriate species based on the purpose and availability of inputs. Institute developed technologies Dweep Han Greens,

Dweep Pro Dhaniya, Dweep Goottee 360, arecanut based cropping systems, woody pepper cultivation, superior germplasm of Malabar tamarind etc. were also demonstrated to the stakeholders. During the valedictory session, Dr. E.B. Chakurkar, Director, ICAR-CIARI interacted with the participants and guided them on various entrepreneurial opportunities available in the agriculture sector. He also encouraged the participants to take up agriculture as a livelihood option. He informed about various initiatives taken by ICAR-CIARI for island youth including the upcoming collaborative online sensitization programme on Entrepreneurship development and Start-up Ecosystem being organized on August 12, 2022. Twenty four trainees including graduate and post-graduate students, homemakers and other island youth expressed satisfaction during the feedback session. Improvement in their knowledge levels on the training theme was evident from the pre- and post-training evaluations.

