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ICAR-CIARI establishes Pandanus Gene Bank

PORT BLAIR, SEPT 5/--/ ICAR-CIARI has established a Pandanus Gene Bank at its Garacharma Research Farm on Monday under the project funded by National Medicinal Plants Board, New Delhi, to conserve, evaluate and utilize different species of the Pandanus collected from different parts of Andaman and Nicobar. In this regard, 175 seedlings of various species viz. Pandanuslerum, Pandanustectorius,

PandanusodoriferandPandanusamaryllifolius were planted in 2.00 acre of terraced land at CIARI campus. As part of World Coconut Day celebrations, thirty seedlings of five released coconut varieties of CIARI viz. DweepHaritha, DweepSona, CIARI Chandan, CIARI Surya and CIARI Annapurna were also planted in the field gene bank. Dr. E.B. Chakurkar, Director, CIARI presided over the programme and inaugurated the planting ceremony which was attended by all Scientists of the Institute. Dr. I. Jaisankar, Senior Scientist and coordinator of the programmewelcomed the gathering and briefed the background of research on Pandanus at CIARI and provided the planting material for the gene bank. Dr. B.A. Jerard, Head, Division of Horticulture & Forestry and the convener of the programme elaborated the global scenario, historical importance of Pandanus trees in the livelihood of aboriginal tribes of Andaman & Nicobar Islands who used the starch-rich fruits as food, leaves as sailcloth, mats and ropes. Moreover, the Genus Pandanus has around 1,000 species which can grow in different environmental conditions from coastlines to 11,000 feet above sea level. He also informed that coconut is the only native source of edible oil while other major oil seed crops are of foreign origin and exhorted to increase the usage of coconut oil in our diet to reduce the burden on country's import of edible oil from other countries. Dr. A. Velmurugan, Head, Division of Natural Resource Management, Dr. S.K. Zamir Ahmed, Social Science Section and Dr. V. Baskaran, Principal Scientist felicitated the scientific team for its efforts. Later all the participants planted elite coconut and pandanus seedlings in the gene bank. Dr. V. Damodaran, ACTO proposed the vote of thanks.