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# **HORTICULTURE IN ANCIENT INDIA**

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## PREFACE

The literature in Sanskrit is singular for the fact that cannot be treated as mere literary work, a philosophical rumination or speculative treatise. They combine all in one. Knowledge about any subject has to be traced back to the vedic times and the entire literature available has to be referred to in order to procure the details available on that particular subject. In this connection, researches so far conducted by inland and foreign scholars, show that Sanskrit literature contains valuable and dependable scientific knowledge and truth.

The present theme of the science of Horticulture-study of trees and plants has also been the target of research for a few decades. Dr. B.N.Seal and G.P. Majumdar have done pioneering service to this field of study while many other scholars have contributed to this topic from different points of view. In the present treatise attempt has been made to harness to the maximum extent, all the references available regarding Horticulture in its various dimensions and also the contemporary and modern views about the same.

In this attempt it is my duty to thank the staff of the Kuppaswami Sastri Research Institute, Mylapore for their unstinted and unremitting co-operation at various levels of the preparation of this book. I cannot adequately thank my old student and present Editor of the Kuppaswami Sastri Research Institute, Dr. V.Kameswari for her

## Introduction

शं न ओषधीर्वनिनो भवन्तु ।

शं नो रजसस्पतिरस्तु विष्णुः ॥

*To us may herds and forest-trees, be gracious  
gracious the lord victorious of the region.*

*Rgveda, VII. 35.5.*

The philosophy India, of any branch and the traditional life point out to the concept that the human being is part and parcel of the Universe that comprises the animates and inanimates. That is the universe as such, is dichotomous in its animates and inanimates. That is, the universe as such, is dichotomous in its form as *cit* and *acit*. *Cit* is further divided into four groups, namely, *sura*, *nara*, *tiryak* and *sthāvara* - the divine, the human beings, the fauna and the flora. The first three are different from the last as they possess mobility in apposition to its static position. But the last three form a single group of visible and observable creation. The human being is positioned at the top of this ladder of creation; but it does not mean that he is different from the others. He, along with other creations, undergoes the six stages of *Becoming*: genesis, existence, alteration,

he liveth we pervade.

*Rgveda*. X. 97.17.

The morphology i.e., description of the external features of plants and trees was known in India as early as the Vedic times. *Taittirīya Saṁhitā* (VII. 3.19) makes note of the various parts of a plant - The root (*mūla*) panicle (*tula*) the stem (*kanda*). the twig (*valsa*). the flower (*puṣpa*) and the fruit (*Phala*):

ओषधीभ्यः स्वाहा मूलेभ्यः स्वाहा तूलेभ्यः

स्वहा काण्डेभ्यः स्वाहा बल्शेभ्यः स्वाहा

पुष्पेभ्यः स्वाहा फलेभ्यः स्वाहा.... ॥

*Vājasaneyā Sameritā*, XXII. 28, corroborates with *Tai. Sam* (VII. 3.20), which further adds that trees have additional parts like corone (*skandha*), branches (*Śākhā*) and leaves (*parṇa*):

वनस्पतिभ्यः स्वाहा मूलेभ्यः स्वाहा

तूलेभ्यः स्वाहा स्कन्धेभ्यः स्वाहा

शाखाभ्यः स्वाहा पर्णेभ्यः स्वाहा पुष्पेभ्यः

स्वाहा फलेभ्यः स्वाहा..... ॥

The word *baṅga* is also in the Vedas to indicate branches: *Rv.* I.32.5 -*skandhāmsīva kulimsenā....m*; and *AV* X.7.38- *tasmincchrayante ya u ke ca devā Vr̥kṣasya skandhaḥ parita iva śākhāḥ*.

*Viṣṇupurāna* (II.7.38-9) gives a complete description of the plant, paddy. The terminology used here-describing the various parts of the plant can also indicate the general morphology of plants:





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