

ICAR-NRCO and ICAR-CIFA Join Hands together to Integrate Orchid and Fish Farming for Boosting Famers' Income

Orchids are one of the high value crop cultivated for cut flowers and pot plant in Sikkim. Usually, the orchids are grown on the benches thus the space below the benches remains unutilized that can be suitably used for growing other crops/rearing fishes etc. The utilization of unused space below the orchid benches become more important because orchids have long juvenile phase ranging from 2-4 years depending upon cultivar. Director, ICAR-CIFA and Director ICAR-NRCO joined their hands together with the idea of culturing orchids with fishes [ornamental and edible] to boost the income of orchid farmers not only during the juvenile phase of orchids but also throughout the cultivation period. To make it successful experts from CIFA and NRCO had a thorough discussion on the subject on 08.11.2021 and came up with a model for farming fishes with the orchids. This novel model is the integration of the well established technologies developed by ICAR-CIFA and ICAR-NRCO. On 9th of November 2021, the idea for integrating fishes with orchids was put before 40 farmers engaged in cultivation of orchids/fishes. Dr. Ram Pal, Director (Acting), ICAR-NRCO talked about Scope and Avenues of Orchid Cultivation in Sikkim. Dr. Saroj Kumar Swain, Director (Acting), ICAR-CIFA, discussed about the "Possibility of Ornamental Fish Culture for High Returns in Hills". Dr. Padmanav Routray, (Principal Scientist (Carp & Tilapia Breeding) ICAR- CIFA delivered a lecture on "Tilapia Culture for Livelihood Support for Hill Farmers". The farmers were keen to adopt the model. Director-CIFA agreed to install a demonstration unit of the model at ICAR-NRC for Orchids, Sikkim as well as some units at the farmers' field under NEH Programme. During this program a training manual on "Integrated Model of Orchid and Aquaculture" was also released.

