

ICAR-NRC for Orchids Celebrates World Soil Day

ICAR-National Research Centre for Orchids, Pakyong, Sikkim, celebrated World Soil Day 2022. World Soil Day was conceived at the 68th Session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York on 20th December 2013. Since then, it has been celebrated annually on 5th December. Its aim is to promote greater environmental awareness in order to make the best use of the Earth's resources without damaging them. This year's theme for World Soil Day was "Soils: Where food begins". The aim was to raise awareness of the importance of maintaining healthy ecosystems and human well-being by addressing the growing challenges in soil management, raising awareness about soil and encouraging societies to improve soil health. Dr. SS Biswas, Scientist (Soil Science), organised the World Soil Day at NRCO which was attended by 20 farmers and 23 staffs of ICAR-NRC for Orchids including 3 scientists. Citing data from the UN's Food and Agriculture Organisation, he said, "95% of our food comes from soils, while 33% of soils are degraded." He stressed that agricultural production needs to increase by 60% to meet global food demand in 2050 and that soil is the basis for food, feed, fuel and fibre production as well as ecosystem services and human well-being. Soil is also a reservoir for at least a quarter of the world's biodiversity and therefore requires the same attention as above-ground biodiversity. Preventing soil degradation is important as up to 58% of our food needs can be met through sustainable soil management. He urged farmers to do everything possible to manage the soil sustainably without losing its fertility. On this occasion, vegetable seeds were distributed to the Chalamthang farmers.

