

“International Seminar on Sandalwood: Current Trends and Future Prospects” organized by Institute of Wood Science and Technology (IWST) (26th February 2014)

The International Seminar on “Sandalwood: Current Trends and Future Prospects” was organized by the Institute of Wood Science and Technology (IWST) Bangalore during 26-28th February 2014. This seminar was inaugurated by His Excellency, the Governor of Karnataka, Dr. Hans Raj Bhardwaj in the presence of Dr. Veerappa Moily, Union Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas and Minister for Environment and Forests, Government of India and Dr. S. S. Garbyal, Director General (Forests) and Special Secretary to Government of India. This International Seminar was a part of the year-long celebration of the Platinum jubilee of IWST Bangalore. In his welcome address, Dr. V. Ramakantha, the Director of IWST fondly remembered His Highness the Maharaja of Mysore, Shri Krishnaraja Wodeyar IV, renowned as *Raja Rishi*, who envisioned the importance of sandalwood and established the Forest Research Laboratory in 1938, which has now blossomed into IWST.

Dr. S.S. Garbyal, DG (Forests) and Special Secretary to the Government of India delivered the keynote address wherein he put forward the current status of sandalwood and the measures that have been taken to save this species.

The Union Minister Dr. M. Veerappa Moily expressed his great affection for Sandalwood and stated that the world recognizes that the Indian Sandalwood is the best in the world. He emphasized that sandalwood is Karnataka’s pride and that every office and house in the State should have a sandalwood tree. He concluded that it would be a great tragedy for Kannadigas if Sandalwood disappears from this Gandhada Gudi.

In his address, His Excellency Dr. Hans Raj Bhardwaj mentioned that Karnataka and Tamil Nadu are the major natural habitats of sandalwood and has witnessed a drastic decline of sandalwood in its natural habitat. He said that Sandalwood is not only economically important species, but has ecological, socio-cultural, religious significance and an integral part of the cultural heritage of the people of Karnataka, he extolled the people to grow

sandalwood. He further desired that the governments at central and state level should come out with suitable policies and strategies for the conservation of the species. He expressed his love for the sandalwood handicrafts and urged that the artisans need be taken care of and the industry strengthened.

His Excellency, the Governor of Karnataka felicitated Mrs. R.A. Srimathi, a renowned scientist who has carried out pioneering research on Sandalwood. She is now 83 years old, but still pursues her academic interest.

This International Seminar has representation from countries like Australia, Fiji, Hawaii, Pacific Islands and Sri Lanka, which are home to different species of sandalwood. The seminar was attended by people from different parts of the society like researchers, forest officers, industrialists, farmers, plantation owners, entrepreneurs and others.

