

Project Update: August 2010

There has been a 50% population decline of medicinal plants in RET (rare, endangered and threatened) category in the last decade in the state in general and more particularly in the Western Ghats biodiversity hotspot. The primary reason for this is destructive and premature harvesting. One of the reasons for quality planting material (seeds and seedling) for medicinal plants not being available is that, for majority of species, propagation techniques are not standardized. There is need to develop a cultivation package for such species.

In this direction, the Rufford Small Grants Foundation, UK along with biodiversity expert Dr. Ankur Patwardhan, have taken up pilot plantation of two medicinal plant species in Velhe, Pune district, with the help of local farmers.

Two medicinal plant species that are taken up for field trials are *Embelia robusta* (Vavding) and *Salacia oblonga* (Saptarangi), both belonging to RET category. The plants are cultivated in the land of a farmer Vinaykumar Puranik.

