

The orchids are adored for their long lasting, attractive and highly colorful flowers, having played an important role in the development of international trade in cut flowers and potted plants. The ease with which they respond to the development of commercially significant hybrid genotypes has added further to their agility in the trade. Orchid cultivation has become a lucrative business in several countries including Thailand, Holland, Japan, Malaysia, Singapore, Kenya and Sri Lanka. The orchids are also rich in phytochemical contents and used in local formulations to cure a variety of human ailments. India with a vast expanse and varied climatic conditions supports a rich diversity of orchids; more than 1,300 species grow here and these include several that are endemic to the country. The beauty and utility of Indian orchids has been frequently appreciated but we have yet to realize their full economic potential due to lack of improved varieties and appropriate cultivation procedures. It is with this background that NRC Orchids (ICAR) and The Orchid Society of India (TOSI) are collaborating to organize a 2-day conference, 'National Dialogue on Orchid Conservation & Sustainable Development for Community Livelihood' at Pakyong (Sikkim) during March 8-9, 2013. The conference shall discuss on the following themes:

- **Indigenous Orchid Resource: Evaluation and Characterization**
- **Propagation and Genetic Improvement through Conventional & Biotech Means**
- **Cultivation, Management and Value Addition**
- **Orchid Promotion: Public-Private Partnership**

It shall provide a suitable platform for the stakeholders to evolve strategies to prepare a road map for optimizing economic potential of orchids besides promoting their cultivation as a venture climbing vocation for the housewives and unemployed rural youth. The aim is to develop the indigenous orchid resource into a rewarding resource. A large number of orchid scientists, growers, entrepreneurs, enthusiasts and policy planners have confirmed their participation. An exhibition will be organized for the benefit of farmers for increasing awareness. The technical sessions shall comprise both the oral and poster presentations. For oral presentations, facilities for overhead and LCD projectors shall be available. For each poster presentation, 0.8 m x 1.5 m area shall be made available. The posters shall be evaluated and the outstanding ones awarded. The abstracts of the presentations (250-300 words) shall be made available during the conference, and the full papers published in J. Orchid soc. India. On behalf of TOSI, NRCO, and on my own behalf, I feel honoured in inviting you to participate in the conference and enrich its deliberations by presenting a research/review paper in any of the above listed themes. I hope that despite your busy schedule, it shall be possible for you to accept this invitation and confirm your participation by mailing the attached Registration form. You are also requested to send the abstract(s) of your proposed presentation (s) to Dr Ramgopal Devadas (Co- Organising Secretary), NRCO, Pakyong, Sikkim, latest by **February 10, 2013**. An electronic version of the abstract may also be sent in a CD or through E-mail (r.devdas@gmail.com with a copy to nrcorchids@rediffmail.com). The abstract may be typed in MS Word, Times New Roman, 12 point font size, and on A4 size format. It should include title of the presentation, name of the author(s) with affiliation, Introduction, Materials and Methods and major findings in brief. The full papers should reach Professor S. P. Vij as an E-mail attachment (spvijl@rediffmail.com, tosi1984@gmail.com, tosi1984@rediffmail.com) latest by **February 10, 2013**, for publication in a dedicated issue of J. Orchid Soc. India.

R P Medhi
Convener-cum-Organizing Secretary