

## **Arid Zone Horticulture: Some Success Stories**

### **Ber Cultivation**

- With the introduction of improved cultivars the area under ber in Rajasthan has increased during 1984 to 1996 from 229 ha to 829 ha. And production from 1387 t to 4145 t.
- Varieties such as Gola, Seb, Mundia, Umran were found to be promising in this region.
- A preliminary survey has shown that 5 million plants are produced every year which generates employment to the tune of 37,500 man days.
- On average Rs. 20,000 per ha is realized as net profit in normal rainfall years. Even in extreme drought condition in 2002 in Rajasthan, ber fetched 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the income when there was complete failure in other crops.

### **Henna Cultivation**

- Henna (*Lawsania inermis*) is known for natural dye and leaves are used for cosmetic purpose. Its export potential is Rs. 80-100 crores.
- Identification of high yielding MH-1 and MH-2 varieties (3-3.5 q/ha) with high quality of dye and distribution of saplings of improved varieties helped in the spread of henna to about 35000 ha in Rajasthan and Gujarat with a net return of Rs. 10,000 per ha.

### **Senna Cultivation**

- Senna (*Cassia angustifolia*), an ideal crop for degraded land with leaves of medicinal value, is a drought hardy shrub.
- High yielding cultivars Tuticorin and Bikana with 8-10 q / ha /year yield helped in spread of senna cultivation to over 11,000 ha in Rajasthan and Gujarat.
- A Senna composite with 3.8% sennoside content, against 2.84% in commonly grown one, has been developed.
- A net return of Rs. 10,000 per year per ha is expected from senna cultivation in arid zone. The estimated export potential of the crop is Rs. 11 crores.
- Marketing associations have been formed for senna and processing units established in Bikaner and Jodhpur.