

Observation of “19th *Parthenium* Awareness Week” at ICAR Research Complex for Eastern Region, Patna from 16-22 August, 2024

Parthenium hysterophorus, locally called carrot weed, gajar ghas or congress grass has been considered one of the most problematic alien invasive weeds, which is posing a serious threat to human beings and livestock besides deteriorating environment and causing loss of crop productivity and biodiversity. Presently, 35 mha of land in India has been infested with *Parthenium*. The increase of *Parthenium* infestation is alarming. This weed has been considered as one of the greatest sources of dermatitis, asthma, nasal-dermal and nasal-bronchial types of diseases. In view of the seriousness and magnitude of the threat posed by this weed, ICAR Research Complex for Eastern Region, Patna has organized “19th *Parthenium* Awareness Week” from 16-22 August, 2024 by involving Regional Centre and Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs) to make farmers and general public aware about the menace of *Parthenium* and its management strategies. A wide range of activities were conducted to spread maximum awareness among scientists, administrative and technical staff, farmers, students and farm workers. On the eve of “19th *Parthenium* Awareness Week”, a brainstorming session had been arranged, in which the scientific and technical staffs of the Institute, farmers, students and farm workers actively participated as well as interacted about its control measures. The Director of the Institute, Dr. Anup Das stressed on the public awareness and community approach to manage this problematic weed. He also highlighted that integrated weed management programme, built on biological and cultural weed management could be the most effective management method for *Parthenium*. The Heads of different Divisions of the Institute (Dr. Sanjeev Kumar, Head, Division of Crop Research; Dr. Shivani, Head I/C, Division of Land and Water Management, Dr. Kamal Sarma, Head, Division of Livestock and Fishery Management and Dr. Ujjwal Kumar, Head, Division of Socio-Economics and Extension) also deliberately discussed about cost-effective control measures of *Parthenium*. The bio-agents such as use of Mexican beetles (*Zygogramma bicolorata*) and competitive plants such as *Cassia* spp., marigold or fodder crops can be combined to reduce the menace of this weed. In this programme, Dr. Sonaka Ghosh, Scientist, Division of Land and Water Management delivered a lecture on “Strategies for *Parthenium hysterophorus* L. Management” as well as stressed on the impact of climate change such as role of increased carbon dioxide and temperature on *Parthenium* interference. Also, an activity on *Parthenium* uprooting programme had been arranged. All the staff members of the institute actively participated in *Parthenium* eradication drive by removing the weeds present the Institute premises. The Institute campus and Farm area are approaching to achieve *Parthenium* free campus. The programme was coordinated by Dr. Sonaka Ghosh,

Scientist, Division of Land and Water Management; Dr. Rakesh Kumar, Senior Scientist, Division of Crop Research; and Dr. Shivani, Principal Scientist, Division of Land and Water Management. The Technical support was provided by Mr. Anil Kumar, Mr. Abhishek Kumar, Mr. Sanjay Rajpoot and Mr. Umesh Mishra of ICAR-RCER, Patna. The programme ended with the formal vote of thanks by Dr. Rakesh Kumar Singh, Senior Scientist, Division of Crop Research, ICAR-RCER, Patna.

(Source: ICAR Research Complex for Eastern Region, Patna)



(Brainstorming session on “*Parthenium* management strategies” at ICAR-RCER, Patna)



(*Parthenium* uprooting activity at ICAR-RCER campus along with KVKs)