

The field of plant embryology enlarged through several stages. Commencing with descriptive embryology, the field advanced towards comparative and experimental embryology. Embryological features are acknowledged to play a significant role in successful plant reproduction under assorted environmental conditions. Concurrently, embryology has emerged as an extensive discipline of plant reproductive biology. A deeper comprehension of reproductive features as well as varietal processes is of great value in breeding programmes. Reproductive biology has a vast scope and has opened new avenues for advanced research.

This Festschrift is in honour of Prof. A.K. Bhatnagar who spent thirty-five years working profoundly in the field of reproductive biology of flowering plants. Prof. Bhatnagar made distinct contributions in the comprehension of embryo sac development in various genera belonging to Euphorbiaceae and also chartered a relation between embryology and taxonomy. His endeavours in conservation of certain endemic tree species as a means of their reproductive phenomenon won accolades. Through his relentless efforts, an All India Coordinated Project on Reproductive Biology of Rare, Engangered and Threatened (RET) species was initiated. The project has an expansive scope and is funded by Ministry of Environment, Forests & Climate Change, New Delhi.

We feel blessed to have a protracted and fortunate association with Prof. A.K. Bhatnagar and take this opportunity to cede our sincere gratitude towards him. His knowledge on floral attributes, pollinators and other aspects of reproduction in plants effectively reflects his passion for the field of reproductive biology. The present volume is a contributive compilation of eighteen chapters from experts in the field. We are indebted to the avid authors for their contributions in the present volume. Also, the interactions with them were enlightening and will be cherished. Due to Prof. Bhatnagar's popularity across the academic fraternity we received an enthusiastic response. We extend our sincere apologies to those whose contributions could not be accommodated.

The book offers a broad perspective on current status of reproductive biology and conservation of plants. While some chapters highlight the molecular basis of signalling and thus expand avenues of otherwise conventional premises such as structure of seeds; others detail the nuances in sexual reproductive events of interesting plant species. The advent of analytical instruments, sophisticated microscopes, advanced photo- and videography along with augmented comprehension of reproductive phenomenon have resulted in new insights. The volume provides a recent

account on various aspects of sexual reproduction in flowering plants and will be of great value to both undergraduate and postgraduate students from botany, forestry, agricultural sciences, and life sciences disciplines.

We are grateful to Prof. H.Y. Mohan Ram, doyen in Plant Sciences for the foreword of present volume. He was very supportive and encouraged us immensely during preparation of the volume.

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