

Indian Noni to be in full bloom

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MORINDA citrifolia indicus, popularly known as Indian Noni, a medicinal plant with a wide range of therapeutic values, will get a boost in days to come with the World Noni Research Foundation (WNRF) planning to raise it in about 20,000 acres in southern states.

The global Noni market is worth about \$3 billion and India's share in it is negligible now. A 800 ml Noni bottle is sold at a prohibitive price of Rs 1,200. But the price will come down when its production is taken up on a large scale.

WNRF, which has its clinical and experimental research programmes in Hyderabad, is planning to take up contract farming of Noni in the State with a buy-back arrangement with

farmers at a predetermined price. Noni cultivation has already caught up in Tamil Nadu and Karnataka. It is being raised at Vijayawada and other places in the State. About 300 plants can be raised on one acre. The average of yield of a plant is 12 kg.

The focus will be on developing Noni Villages for socio-economic development of the people at the grass-root level apart from monitoring and encouraging morinda products in the market. The plant has attracted the attention for its therapeutic properties and has been in focus for the past

Plan to raise the medicinal plant in 20,000 acres



four years, G Satish Kumar, chairman of clinical research programme, told *City Express*.

Noni, which is identified as a medicinal plant, is now sold as a food supplement concentrate. It is said to regulate cell function, maintain a healthy skin, hair and scalp and reduce the risk of developing cancer besides inhibiting tumour growth. It is also said to be effective in relieving

pain, rejuvenating body, reducing inflammation, purifying blood and improving digestion. Though a native of India, Noni has been felled due to its obnoxious odour during fruiting. This plant is very adaptive

and can grow in saline as well as rocky areas at 2,000 feet above the mean sea level. It is now spread across the globe.

Its fruit, flower, leaves, bark and the root are useful in preparation of health products. "The research is aimed at making people accept Noni everyday and for everything," he said.

The foundation will shortly interact with Noni growers in the country and collate the research data in various sectors. It will also work to conserve Morinda species in India, develop a bio-informatics database on the species existing in India.

It will also support research on potential of Morinda species in pharmaceutical, cosmetology, dye, agriculture and other fields. About 40 universities across the world have been engaged in Noni research.