



Agarwood

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In News: The Union Minister for Development of North Eastern Region recently laid the foundation stone for the **₹80 crore Agarwood Value Chain Development Scheme** to promote cultivation, processing, and trade of Agarwood in India.

About Agarwood

1. **Scientific Name:** *Aquilaria malaccensis*
2. **Family:** Thymelaeaceae
3. **Common Names:** Agarwood, Oud, Gaharu
4. **Significance:** Prized as **the world's most valuable incense**; also used in **perfumes, essential oils, and traditional medicine**

Formation of Resin

1. Agarwood resin is produced as a **defense mechanism** by the tree when infected by **Phaeoacremonium species** (previously *Phialophora parasitica*).
2. The resin is **dark, fragrant, and highly valuable**.

Habitat & Distribution

Global

1. South Asia (Himalayan foothills)
2. Southeast Asia
3. Rainforests of Papua New Guinea

India

1. Northeastern states: **Assam, Tripura, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Mizoram, Manipur**
2. Prefers subtropical forests
3. Can grow in a **wide range of soils**, including poor sandy soils

Growth Characteristics

1. Grows at **elevations from a few meters to 1000 m**, ~500 m ideal
2. Seedlings require **shade and water** but grow rapidly
3. Flowering and seeding can occur **as early as 4 years**
4. In the wild, full maturation may take **~10 years**

Uses & Applications

1. **Incense and spiritual purposes**
2. **Traditional medicine**

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3. **Essential oils and perfumery**
4. High international market value; contributes to **livelihoods and forest economy** in NE India

Significance of the Agarwood Value Chain Development Scheme

1. Promote **scientific cultivation and sustainable harvesting**
2. Encourage **local entrepreneurship and employment**
3. Facilitate **value addition and export promotion**
4. Preserve **wild Aquilaria populations** by reducing pressure on natural forests