

Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Reasi, SKUAST-Jammu organized Parthenium awareness campaign

Krishi Vigyan Kendra Reasi, SKUAST-Jammu kick started the “Parthenium Awareness Week” to be celebrated throughout the country during 16-22 August, 2015.

A team of Scientists and staff of KVK Reasi visited Delhi Public School Katra on 17th August 2015, and addressed a gathering of more than 60 students including staff members about Parthenium.

Krishi Vigyan Kendra Reasi, SKUAST-Jammu also organised a parthenium awareness programme at Govt. Hr. Secondary School Aghar Jitoo on 20.08.2015.

This programme was organized to create awareness and educate the people/ students about Parthenium, which is also recognised as the one of the seven most dreaded weeds of the world.

Initiating the programme Dr. Lalit Updhayay, Scientist, *said that Parthenium hysterophoru*, locally called gajar ghas or congress grass, is an alien weed which sneaked into India along with wheat imported from USA in the early 1950s. This troublesome weed has been causing enormous losses in agricultural productivity human and animal health and biodiversity. He explained the effect of this weed and said that it causes allergy-type responses like hay fever, photo-dermatitis, asthma, skin rashes, peeling skin, puffy eyes, and eczema in human being through pollen, air borne pieces of dried plant materials and roots.

Dr. Sanjay Koushal, Scientist, explained that nearly 4.50 million hectares of area is under threat from the deadly weed Parthenium, which, if not controlled, can reduce India's food grains production by a sizable per cent. He explained various harmful effects of Parthenium on crops, livestock and human beings including degradation of natural ecosystems. He also explained that the plants should be uprooted (not cut or broken) before flowering and burnt or composted. If uprooting is done after the flowering stage, the pulled out plants are to be burnt without transporting to far off places, to avoid seed dispersal. Manual method also finds a place in the integrated approach in order to achieve quick results. He also explained other chemical and biological methods for its removal.

Other who were present on the occasion includes Dr. Mandeep Singh Azad, Scientist who elaborated effect of parthenium on livestock, it can cause anorexia, alopecia, dermatitis and diarrhea. It aggressively colonizes disturbed sites resulting in reduction of pasture growth and forage production.

The principal and staff members appreciated the campaign and encouraged the students to participate in its eradication with full zeal.

