



# Major Breakthrough in Indigenous Heeng Cultivation

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After about **5 years of continuous effort**, the **first flowering and seed setting** of [heeng \(asafoetida\)](#) at **IHBT Palampur** were successfully reported. This achievement is a **landmark milestone** in heeng cultivation, demonstrating that the plant can be **acclimatized to Indian conditions**.

- In 2020, the **CSIR-Institute of Himalayan Bioresource Technology (IHBT), Palampur** launched a **national mission to introduce heeng cultivation** with plantation in **Kwaring village, Lahaul Valley (HP)**, using seeds sourced from **Iran and Afghanistan**.

## Heeng

- **About:** This plant is a **perennial herb** belonging to the **Umbelliferae (Apiaceae)** family.
  - The **oleo-gum resin**, extracted from the **plant's thick root** after **5 years of maturity**, forms the edible **asafoetida** used in **culinary and medicinal applications**.
- **Ideal Environmental Conditions:** Heeng thrives in **cold, arid climates** such as those found in **Iran, Afghanistan, and Central Asia**.
  - The plant prefers **sandy, well-drained soils** with minimal moisture. It requires temperatures between **10-20°C** but can tolerate extremes of **40°C in the heat and -4°C in the cold**.
  - It also needs **very little rainfall (under 300 mm annually)** for optimal growth.
  - In India, regions such as **Lahaul-Spiti and Uttarkashi** are well-suited for cultivating heeng due to their **semi-arid, high-altitude** conditions.
- **Significance:** This ancient **Ayurvedic herb**, mentioned in the **Mahabharata**, [Charaka Samhita](#), and [Panini's texts](#), is prized for its **digestive benefits**, relieving abdominal pain, enhancing taste, and aiding digestion.
  - Despite being the **world's largest consumer**, **India relied entirely on imports** from **Afghanistan, Iran, and Uzbekistan** until early last decade.

**Read More:** [Heeng Cultivation Project in India](#)

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