CHAPTER II

ABOUT THE REGION, DISTRICT AND THE UNIVERSITY BOTANIC GARDEN
The state of Maharashtra

The State of Maharashtra forms a major part of peninsular India with the sea coast on the western side. The state extends from latitude 16.4 North to 22.1 North and longitude 72.6 to 80.9 East. It has a total area of 3,03,232 Sq.Kms. The state can be divided physically into three unequal parts:

(a) The Konkan region: Sahyadri mountains run almost parallel to the Arabian sea coast from one end of the state to the other. The narrow strip between the Sanyadri and the Arabian sea coast is called Konkan. This region is highly undulated and receives heavy rainfall (200 cms and above) that causes severe soil erosion.

(b) The Deccan Plateau: It is situated on the eastern side of the Sahyadri range and slopes from West to East. From eastern flank of Sahyadri range several spurs of varying lengths stretch out in eastern direction. These spurs have heights of 334 m to 500 m above the surrounding territory and demarcate different valleys.

(c) The Tapi valley: It comprises the western part of Viderbha.
Maharashtra gets 82% of the total rain during the months of June to September and the remaining is received in part between the months of November to January and part in the hot weather months of April and May.

The food crops are cereals (rice, jowar and wheat), pulses (pigeon pea, horsegram, cowpea, blackgram), sugarcane, fruits and vegetables. The non-food crops include the oil-seeds (peanut, safflower, linseed), cotton and fodders. The cropped area is 193,66,800 ha of which 123,0000 ha is under irrigation.

**About the Marathwada region**

Marathwada region of the state of Maharashtra, with an area of 64798 Sq.Kms. comprises of five districts — Aurangabad, Beir, Parbhani, Nanded and Osmanabad (please refer the map). The region falls within North latitude 17° 35' and 20° 40' and East longitude 74° 40' and 78° 15'. The region is also known as Aurangabad division for official and administrative purposes. Aurangabad is the most underdeveloped and also the smallest division in respect of both area and population as compared to other divisions of the state (Bombay, Poona and Nagpur).
All the five districts lie on the Deccan table land with a slope towards the southeast. The plateau has an average altitude of about 667 m above the m.s.l. The altitude varies from 300 m to 1000 m. The underlying formation of the whole region is trap rocks which give rise to heavy black soils which retain moisture. The rivers Godavari, Penganga and Purna with a number of their tributaries form the major drainage system. These rivers in conformity with the general topography flow towards the southeast.

Marathwada has the typical tropical hot and dry climate. Of the three seasons, summer is very warm with maximum temperature as high as 46.1° during May in Nanded. Winter (October to February) is pleasant with temperature falling as low as 2.2° in Bhir district. Monsoon normally starts in June and lasts till October. During this period, Nanded district receives the maximum rainfall while Bhir district the least.

According to 1969 - 1970 Government statistics the total cultivated area was 5,675,000 ha. The net area under irrigation was 2,27,000 ha, 2,64,200 ha were permanent pastures and 2,27,000 ha land was under forest.
Thus the forest area in this region in relation to the
total geographical area is only 4.07 %. Dry mixed
deciduous forests predominate. At places these
degenerate into a scrub jungle.

About Aurangabad district

Aurangabad district, occupies an area of 16,718.2
Sq.Kms., is situated in the upper Godavari basin to the
extreme north-west of Marathwada. The general elevation
above the sea level varies from 665 to 735 m on the
North and from 565 to 635 m towards the South.

Soils of Aurangabad district are medium to deep
black and contain large quantities of calcium and
magnesium carbonates. These are deficient in nitrogen
and phosphorus and crack heavily in summer. The soils
are quite fertile and are particularly suitable for
cultivation of wheat, cotton, virginia tobacco, chillies
and jowar.

The climate of Aurangabad is pleasant and
agreeable during the greater part of the year. The
climatic year may be divided into 3 short seasons
(a) moderately warm, wet season from June to
September
(b) a cool dry season from October to February, and
(c) a hot dry season from March to May.
During the rainy season the temperature does not fall below 17° and normally ranges between 21° to 36°. The winter season is comparatively dry. January is the coldest month of the year. The mean maximum temperature in the month of May rises to even as high as 41°. In summer, the days are hot though the nights are fairly cool.

About the University Botanic Garden

The Marathwada University Campus is located on the north-western fringe of the city. The Botanic Garden is situated almost in the centre of the campus. It occupies an area of about 10 hectares and is also being developed as an experimental wing of the Department. The garden was taken up for development in June 1965. The garden is surrounded by a nallah almost on three sides. A road of 15' width passing through the garden East to West divides it into two parts. The garden is provided with adequate lift irrigation facilities.