PREFACE

Tea is the most widely drunk non alcoholic beverage. The tender shoots of three taxa of the genus *Camellia*—*C. sinensis* (China tea), *C. assamica* (Assam tea) and *C. assamica* ssp. *lasiocalyx* (Cambod tea) yield commercial tea.

China tea is narrow leaved, Assam tea broad leaved and Cambod tea with intermediate leaves. Tea plants are trees by nature, but they are pruned to convenient height so as to increase the production of pluckable shoots and also to make the process of plucking easier.

The Indian subcontinent is rich in genetic diversity of tea and proper evaluation of the genetic resources may enhance the scope of selection and other breeding programmes to improve tea production and the quality of tea produced.

The present study is a humble effort to screen the diversity of Assam tea so as to study the juvenile growth pattern of the crop, to assess the extent of genetic variability of it, to generate new information on the genetics of agronomic characters of the crop and also to analyze the nature and distribution of such characters on a plant breeding perspective.