III ECONOMIC IMPORTANCE OF THE FAMILY

The economic use of the Myrtaceae has dates back to the pre-historic times. *Syzygium aromaticum*, ‘the clove plant’ has world wide use as a spice. It is used medicinally as a stimulant, carminative, and cure for flatulence. Being evergreen many species are good hedge plants, eg. *Eugenia uniflora, Syzygium zeylanicum*. The fruits of many species, like *Eugenia uniflora, E. bracteata, Psidium guajava, P. cattleyanum, Syzygium jambos, S. malaccense, S. samarengens, S. cumini, S. aqueum*, etc., are edible. Some species like, *Syzygium cumini*, are also used for the treatment of diabetes mellitus. Many species of *Eucalyptus* are cultivated as avenue trees because of their tall and lofty straight bole. They are the prime raw materials in pulp and paper industry. Species like *Eucalyptus citriodora, E. globulus, E. marginate*, etc., are cultivated for eucalyptus oil. This oil is used in perfumery industry, and in the treatment of asthma and bronchitis. *Callistemon citrinus, Melaleuca leucadendron*, etc., are cultivated as ornamental plants. The green and dried fruits of *Myrtus communis* are condiments. Powder of the dried leaves is a good source of plant based dye. The bark of *Rhodomyrtus tomentosa* is applied in tannin industry. Species of *Syzygium*, such as *S. gardneri, S. cumini, etc.*, are fine timber plants. The oil obtained from leaves of *Pimenta officinalis* is used for flavouring. The unripe dried fruits of this are used in pickles and ketchups. It is also used medicinally as a stimulant.