Acknowledgments

I was able to carry out and complete this research work on time, only with the help, cooperation and goodwill of many people, to whom I will be forever indebted.

It is my privilege to record my deepest sense of gratitude and sincere thanks to my supervisor Dr. Joy P. Joseph for his inspiring guidance and encouragement from the inception of this work, to its completion.

I owe it to myself to express my sincere gratitude to the University Grants Commission, New Delhi, for granting research fellowship (JRF/SRF) for this study.

I remember with gratitude and reverence, the help and guidance extended to me by Dr. G.M. Nair, Director of Tropical Botanical Garden and Research Institute (TBGRI) at Palode, Dr. G.A. Ravishankar, Head of the Plant Cell Biotechnology Department of Central Food Technological Research Institute in Mysore, who helped me immensely to improve the quality of this work.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to Dr. Samuel Mathew, Associate Professor, Aromatic Medicinal Plants Research Station, Odakkali for sparing his valuable time and effort and lending his expertise for the HPLC of samples. I thank Dr. J. Thomas, the then Head of the Research Station for granting permission to carry out the HPLC analysis.

My special thanks to Dr. Satheesh at the Department of Biotechnology, TBGRI for his valuable suggestions on root culture.

I thank Fr. John Therezhath, Fr. George Koyikara, Fr. Joseph Poonely and Fr. A.J. Saviance - the Principals of Sacred Heart College, Thevara for permitting the use of laboratory facilities and ensuring a conducive atmosphere for my research studies.

I also thank Prof. T.J. Joseph, Head of the Department of Botany, for making all the facilities of the Department available to me for this endeavour. I also express my gratitude to faculty members of the Department and non-teaching staff for their help and cooperation at various critical stages of my work.

I extend my sincere thanks and appreciation to Dr. V.J. Dominic and Dr. M.S. Francis for their material help, keen interest and moral support throughout the period of my research.

I would like to acknowledge with thanks the help received from Prof. K.V. Thomas, Prof. Thomas Jacob, Dr. Babu Joseph, Prof. M.T. Mathew, the heads of the Department of Chemistry, Sacred Heart College, Thevara, members of the faculty and non-teaching staff, especially Sri. A.J. Saju, for their kind cooperation and logistical support.
I wish to acknowledge the technical help received from Dr. Rubin Jose, Department of Botany, University of Kerala, Karyavattom (chemical analysis), Dr. E.S. Santhosh Kumar, Germplasm Division, TBGRI (identification of specimens), Dr. Manjula S., Rajiv Gandhi Centre for Biotechnology, Jagathy (material and literature support), Dr. Y. Saideshwara Rao and Ms. Mary Mathew K., Tissue Culture Laboratory, Spices Board, Kochi (photomicrography) Sri Sudhikumar A.V., Dr. P.A. Sebastian and Prof. Samson Davis Padayatty, Department of Zoology, Sacred Heart College, Thevara (3D photography).

Statistical analysis of data was done with the help of Sri. K. Krishna Iyer (Retd. Scientist, CIFT), Sri. Shankaran Namboothiri (Lecturer, School of Mathematics, CUSAT) and Sri. Cyriac Antony (Lecturer, Dept. of Mathematics, Sacred Heart College, Thevara).

I owe my thanks to the librarians and staff of the libraries of TBGRI Palode, CTCRI Sreekaryam, TNAU Coimbatore, CFTRI Mysore, CDRI Lucknow, RRII Kottayam, Department of Botany, University of Kerala, Karyavattom, Mahatma Gandhi University, Kottayam and Sacred Heart College, Thevara for their timely and fruitful cooperation for the collection of literature. My special thanks are due to the Director and Staff of National Institute of Science, Communication and Information Resources (NISCAIR), New Delhi, for providing me with most wanted papers at short notice.

With great pleasure I express my appreciation to my senior colleagues and friends - Ms. A. Aruna, Ms. Manju Madhavan, Sr. Philo T.J., Sr. Johncy Manihottathil, Sr. Sanjay V.N. and Ms. Sreeja Chellappan for their material help, moral support, timely alerts, encouragement and valuable advice. I also wish to thank each and every one of my juniors - the M.Sc. students who took special interest in this venture and encouraged me to complete the work.

Words are insufficient to say thanks for the timely support and critical evaluation of the manuscript by my father Sri. K. J. Joy and uncle Sri. T. P. Antony, during the final stages of the preparation of the thesis.

I am immensely thankful to my brother, Sri. J. G. Paul for the cover design, data entry and preparation of the thesis in its current form. I also thank my brother Sri. Mathew George for lending his digital camera for taking photographs for visually recording the observations.

Last but not the least, I owe my special thanks to my husband, Sri. Jose George and our dear and near ones without whose absolute understanding and inspiration, I would not have been able to dedicate as much time and energy as I did to the consummation of my research work.

Rose George