ECONOMIC IMPORTANCE

The family Brassicaceae is of considerable economic importance for the vegetables, oil, weeds and ornamentals. The genus *Brassica* is a remarkable group of plants containing some of the most useful of esculent plants such as the broccoli, Brussels sprout, cabbage, cauliflower, colewart, colza, kale, kohlrabi, mustard rape, savoy cabbage, turnip etc. *Brassica chinensis* (pakchoi) and *Brassica pekinensis* (petsai) both known as chinese cabbage are grown as vegetable or salad plants. The genus *Christolea* locally known as shagsoo is used as vegetable after mixing with milk in young stages. *Megacarpea* is also edible. Species of *Cardamine*, *Lepidium* and *Nasturtium* are grown for salad and garnishing.

Seeds of many genera of the family are also equally important. Mustards (*Brassica nigra* and *B. juncea*) are used as condiments. The seeds of *Cardaria draba* have spicy flavour and may be used as a substitute for pepper (Jafri, 1973).

Seeds of *Brassica campestris*, *B. carinata*, *B. juncea*, *B. napus*, *B. nigra* and *B. pekinensis* are preseed for edible oils. *Camelina sativa*, *Crambe hispanica*, *Brassica sativa* and *Sinapis alba* are also cultivated as oil plants in different regions.
Some of the wild species are also oleiferous e.g., seeds of Capsella contain about 15 - 20\% oil. The seeds of Thlaspi arvense also contain 25\% oil suitable for illumination. Besides the industrial value of the oil and fat content, the residue remaining after oil extraction is often rich in proteins and therefore is incorporated into animal feeds.

Green leaves and fruits of Sinapis arvensis are edible and the fatty oil obtained from seeds is used in soap making and also for food after hydrogenation. Young sprouts of Conringia orientalis are edible and seeds contain fatty oil. In Lepidium sativum the seeds contain 56\% fatty oil, suitable for illumination and fresh leaves are edible as salad.

Cardaria chalepensa, Isatis minima and Malcolmia behboudiana are used as vegetable and fodder. Physorrhynchus brahucicus is browsed by camel and goats and the leaves are cooked as a vegetable by poorer people. Crambe kotschyana leaves and roots are edible, flowers produce nectar and plant as a whole is a good fodder for camels and goats. It may be utilized in distilleries because of sufficient quantity of starch and sugar in it.

Isatis stocksii, Octoceras lehmannianum, Spirorrhynchus sabulosus, Savignya, Moricandia are used as fodder for camels goats and sheeps. Erysimum repandum is sometimes used as fodder for sheep. Shepherd's purse (Capsella), pepper grass (Lepidium) and some species of Korippe are weeds of economic significance, widespread in cultivated fields.
Aurinia, Cheiranthus, Diceratella, Erysimum, Hesperis, Iberis, Malcolmia, Matthiola and Lobularia are cultivated as ornamentals. Lobularia maritima is a good source of honey. Few species like Arabis are grown as ornamentals in borders and rock gardens. Parrya exscapa is a high altitude plant with handsome flowers.

Isatis tinctoria is a honey producing plant, blue and green pigments obtained from the plant are sometimes used for dyeing cloth. Lunnaria annua is an ornamental and infructescences with persistent silvery septa are used for interior decoration. Raphanus raphanistrum is cultivated for green fodder and ornamental purposes. A few B. napus (Swedish rape) and Sinapis alba furnish fodder and green manure respectively.

The seeds of Descurainia sophia are locally used by the name Tscher-i-lasi in the early stages of measles diseases. The seeds of Erysimum perskianum serve as crude material for the production of Cardiac drugs.