

Sandalwood

Prelims: Current events of national and international importance | Species

Why in News?

The Union Budget 2026-27 highlighted sandalwood (*Santalum album*) as an important part of India's social and cultural heritage.

- **Biological Nature** - *This species is a hemi-root parasite that relies on host plants for water and nutrients.*
 - Selection of unsuitable host plants can result in stunted growth, chlorosis, and increased mortality.
 - For example, *Malabar neem* produces dense shade, which suppresses the growth of sandalwood.
 - *Melia* trees are often harvested for plywood, which further reduces the sandalwood's vigour.
- **Climate-Smart Traits** - This is a high-value and resilient tree species.
 - *It exhibits tolerance to salinity and drought, is hardy, possesses a light crown, requires minimal nutrients, and adapts to a range of soil types.*
- **Agroforestry Integration** - This species is well-suited for block plantations, boundary plantings, and mixed cropping systems.
 - Compatible host species include gooseberry, mango, custard apple, and legumes such as red gram.
 - Cultivation of this species can increase farm incomes and enhance environmental resilience.
- **Geographical spread** - Cultivation has moved beyond traditional Southern belts to **Telangana, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh**, and parts of northern India.

Sandalwood Development Committee

- **Constituted by** - Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister and Union government think tank NITI Aayog,
- **Chaired by** - Finance Secretary
- **Representatives** -
 - Ministry of Environment, Forests & Climate Change,
 - Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare,
 - Ministry of Commerce,
 - Ministry of Ayush,
 - National Medicinal Plants Board of the Government of India are members of this committee.
 - Representatives of the Institute of Wood Science & Technology, Bengaluru.
 - Forest College & Research Institute of the Tamil Nadu Agriculture University are also represented in this committee.



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SANDALWOOD: INDIA'S TRADE SNAPSHOT (1996-97 TO 2023-24)



INDICATOR	1996-97 TO 2023-24
 Sandalwood oil imports	~505 tonnes
 Value of imports	US\$196.21 million
 Sandalwood oil exports	139 tonnes
 Value of exports	US\$21.44 million

GLOBAL MARKET OUTLOOK: STRONG GROWTH AHEAD

MARKET	CURRENT	FUTURE PROJECTION
 Global sandalwood market	\$265.8 million (2023) →	\$502.2 million by 2030
 Sandalwood oil market	\$182.5 million (2024) →	\$388.1 million by 2035



Revival and expansion of sandalwood cultivation can reduce import dependence, boost exports and help India capture a growing global market.

**Plant today,
prosper tomorrow!**



Reference

[Down to Earth | Sandalwood Reborn](#)



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