

THE SUCCESS OF THE FIRST EVER 'SOHPHLANG AND NEISHOW' CUM TRAINING PROGRAMME ON PPV&FR ACT, 2001 –

Dated:13th&14th DECEMBER,2013.

ORGANIZED: KVK, WEST KHASI HILLS.
SPONSORED:ZPD and PPV&FR

<i>Sohphlang</i> (<i>Flemingia vestita</i>)	- tuberous root having fruit-like or nut-like flavour
<i>Nei-lieh</i> (<i>Perilla frutescens</i>)	- some kind of sesame seed

About Sohphlang and nei-lieh

*Sohphlang is a small plant with edible roots or tuber like fruit scientifically known as Flemingia vestita and has been used traditionally as an anthelmintic (that expel parasitic worms on human), the basis of which is scientifically validated. The delicate skin is easily peeled off to expose a smooth cream-coloured flesh that has a sweet, nut-like flavour. In terms of nutritional value, it is particularly rich in phosphorus and proteins. It is found as a wild herb along the mountain slopes of Himalayas. It is distributed in Sichuan and Yunnan provinces of China, Nepal, Khasi hills and Jaintia Hills of Meghalaya. It is also sparsely found in Laos, Philippines and Vietnam. However, it is commercially cultivated **only** in Meghalaya. Crunchy sohphlang is eaten raw either with salt and some red chilli powder and the best combination is with nei-lieh (Perilla frutescens) which has been ground to a fine paste together with salt.*

In an effort to showcase the favorite eatable of the local indigenous people of the Khasis and Jaintias, Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK), West Khasi Hills organized the first-of-its-kind 'Sohphlang and Nei Show' at U Tirot Sing Memorial Hall, Pyndengumiong, Mairang on 13th &14th December, 2013. The event was inaugurated by Shri D. J. Ingty, Director of Horticulture, Govt. of Meghalaya in the presence of Dr. J. K Durong, Former Director of Agriculture, Shri. D.S Lyngdoh Joint Director of Agriculture(R&T) Cum Nodal officer, KVKs, Meghalaya, Dr.A.K Tripathi Principal Scientist and Head, Div.of .Social Sciences, ICAR, NEH Region, Umiam, Shri. L. Syiemlieh District Horticulture Officer, West Khasi Hills, Nongstoin, Shri.C. Sawkmie, SDAO, Mairang Sub-Division, Mairang, Shri.Andrew Dkhar, ADA, Directorate of Agriculture, Shillong, Shri. D. Pyngrope, ADH, Nongstoin, West Khasi Hills, Shri. T.Pyrbot PD, ATMA, Nongstoin, West Khasi Hills, ADOs & HDOs, Nongstoin &Mairang, DDK and AIR, Shillong, Headmen/Sordars of many villagers and many farmers .In a unique way to showcase its works, KVK, West Khasi Hills felicitated the guests with the produce from its '**On Farm Trials**' and '**Front line Demonstrations**' which includes vegetables, fruits, chicken, fish, etc.



Fig. Chief Guest and other invitees

The initiative has gained lots of appreciation from the guests and also the general public because the objective of the show was to “promote” and “conserve” these indigenous food (Sohphlang in particular) which are enjoyed by the local people of all ages. The show also aimed to sensitised the farmers about the importance of cultivating these crops which were highly priced since the cost of sohphlang was Rs. 200/kg and Nei-lieh was Rs. 300/kg and has a good demand in the market.



Fig. Sohphlang and Nei

The concept of the show is to “Love our own, respect that belong to others” as Smt. Mariana Dkhar, Programme Co-ordinator, KVK, West Khasi Hills said because in today’s world, the indigenous practices has gradually been neglected and replaced by other cultures. Hence there is a need to preserve and encourage the farmers specially the rural youths to cultivate on a commercial scale. The demand for sohphlang as foodstuff has increased so much that it has been cultivated as a cash crop and although regularly available in the local markets, there has been a gradual decline in its cultivation. Although, most of the farming practices for sohphlang involved jhumming, it is also possible to cultivate in farm land and avoid jhumming. This has also caught the attention of the KVK, West Khasi Hills, in doing research to cultivate sohphlang in a more sustainable way which has also shown promising results.

Sohphlang which usually came just before the onset of winter, have supported the livelihood of many farmers especially in villages. Apart that they are being sold in the market place, they are also one of the favorite eateries for travellers and that could be found by the number of vendors in different places of major roads. Since in the winter season, many farmers have nothing to work and to encourage them, KVK, West Khasi Hills has taken this very seriously which would uplift their livelihood.



Fig. Farmer and vendor of Sohphlang and u Nei

The show has also gained momentum after farmers from more than twenty two villages from two C & RD Blocks (Mawthadraishan & Mairang) participated enthusiastically and have started understanding the wealth of indigenous food in which sohphlang and nei-lieh entered a special place. Hundreds of people thronged the premises of the Tirot Sing Hall to get a glimpse of the variety of fresh sohphlang and nei-lieh being displayed there. It was also an opportunity for the farmers to market their produce since it was a market day and also some traders have already booked prior to the show.



Fig. Glimpse of visitors during Sohphlang and u Nei show

After judging by the selected guests, the KVK West Khasi Hills also distributed prizes to the winners in five categories along with Certificates which included-

- a) Sohphlang Pyllun (round)
- b) Sohphlang Jrong (long)
- c) Nei lieh Heh (big)
- d) Nei lieh Rit (small)
- e) Nei lieh Nar (hard)

The different prizes were:

- 1st Prize - Rs. 1,500/-
- 2nd Prize - Rs. 1000/-
- 3rd Prize - Rs. 750/-
- Consolation Prize - Rs. 500/-



Fig. Judges during sohphlang and Nei show



Fig. Some Winners during sohphlang and Nei show

Realizing the importance of cultivation of sohphlang, the show will cover more places in years to come, and KVK, West Khasi Hills together with the District Agriculture Officer and District Horticulture Officer in organizing such event in an effort to diversify agricultural crops which is expected to take farmers to new heights.

The end purpose of the “Sohphlang and Nei Show” was to accelerate agricultural production and allied activities for improvement of the economy of farmers and also to create in-field job opportunities for the small and marginal farmers in rural areas.

Impact of the Training:

1. Registration of Sohphlang(*Flemingia vestita*) and Neilieh (*Perilla frutescens*) with PPV&FR by Shri.Grossful Pariong and Ialam Lynti SHG-I,Nongjlak village,West Khasi Hills.
2. Registration of Pathaw Shimon/Pathaw Bah with PPV&FR by Shri. Distarland Syiemlieh Mawthong village, South West Khasi Hills.
3. Registration of Eating System (Habit) of Sohphlang together with Neilieh with PPV&FR by Smt.Bilinda Syiemlieh of Tengri village,West Khasi Hills.
4. Collected and Maintained Indigenous Orchid by Nonglwai Orchid Conservation Society,Nonglwai,West Khasi Hills.
5. Farmers were inspired to increase the area under Sohphlang (*Flemingia vestita*) and Neilieh (*Perilla frutescens*) this year.