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CSIR Floriculture Mission: Driving Innovation

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CSIR Floriculture Mission: Driving Innovation

 **Science Reporter** Chapter 1 · 3 min read ·

Source: Science Reporter, Vol. 63, No. 03, March 2026 | CSIR-NISCPR

India's floriculture sector is a multi-billion-dollar opportunity that remains largely untapped. The **CSIR Floriculture Mission**, launched in 2020, aims to transform India from an importer of high-value floral crops to a globally competitive producer through science-driven innovation.

THE FLORICULTURE OPPORTUNITY

India imports approximately **\$1.2 billion (USD)** worth of floriculture products annually — from cut flowers and bulbs to essential oils derived from aromatic flowers. This represents a massive import substitution opportunity. Simultaneously, floriculture offers:

- **Employment** for marginal farmers, women, and tribal communities
- **Income diversification** beyond food crops
- Integration with **apiculture** (honey bee farming) for dual income
- **Export earnings** through cut flowers, flower extracts, and ornamental plants

ABOUT THE CSIR FLORICULTURE MISSION

PARAMETER	DETAIL
Launched	2020, by Dr. Harsh Vardhan (then Science & Technology Minister)
Coverage	21 States and Union Territories
Nodal lab	CSIR-Institute of Himalayan Bioresource Technology (IIIM), Palampur
Implementation partners	ICAR Directorate of Floriculture, KVIC, APEDA, TRIFED

SEVEN IMPLEMENTATION VERTICALS

- 1 **Quality Planting Material** — Production of disease-free, high-yield certified plantlets through tissue culture and micropropagation
- 2 **Area Expansion** — Bringing new land under floriculture, especially in Northeastern states, J&K, and hill regions

- 3 **Urban Floriculture** — Rooftop gardens, urban green spaces, and balcony floriculture for city dwellers
- 4 **Post-Harvest Processing & Value Addition** — Cold chains, grading, packaging, and extraction technologies to reduce losses
- 5 **Apiculture Integration** — Flower crops as bee forage; honey + flower dual income model
- 6 **Marketing Linkages** — Connecting growers to mandis, exporters, and online markets
- 7 **Domestication of Wild Ornamentals** — Bringing unique Himalayan and Northeast wildflowers into cultivation

FLAGSHIP INITIATIVE: INDIGENISATION OF TULIPS

India currently imports tulip bulbs from the Netherlands at significant cost. CSIR-IIIM's Field Station at **Bonera (J&K)** has pioneered the first successful indigenisation of tulip cultivation in India:

- Tulips grown in Bonera under controlled conditions achieve commercial quality
- Reduces import dependence; creates a new high-value crop for J&K farmers
- Leverages J&K's temperate climate — the only viable region in India for tulip cultivation
- Tulip Garden, Srinagar is Asia's largest tulip garden; domestic bulb supply is strategically significant

CSIR LABS DRIVING FLORICULTURE RESEARCH

LAB	LOCATION	FOCUS
CSIR-IIIM	Palampur, H.P.	High-altitude floriculture, lavender, saffron
CSIR-NBRI	Lucknow	Ornamental plant improvement, chrysanthemum
CSIR-NEIST	Jorhat, Assam	Northeastern flower varieties, bamboo floriculture
CSIR-IHBT	Palampur	Marigold, rose varieties for North India

UPSC RELEVANCE

GS3 — Agriculture and Allied Sectors:

- Floriculture as part of horticulture diversification strategy
- Import substitution in high-value agriculture
- Role of public R&D (CSIR) in boosting farmer income

GS2 — Governance:

- Mission-mode approach to niche agriculture sectors
- Centre–state coordination in agricultural extension

Key Distinctions for Answers:

- CSIR Floriculture Mission ≠ National Horticulture Mission (NHM) under MoA — different ministry, different focus
- IIIM Palampur ≠ CIMAP Lucknow — IIIM handles Himalayan bioresources including flowers; CIMAP handles medicinal & aromatic plants

FACTS CORNER

- India's annual floriculture imports: ~\$1.2 billion USD
- Mission coverage: 21 States and UTs
- Launched: 2020 by Dr. Harsh Vardhan
- IIIM Bonera (J&K): First successful tulip indigenisation in India
- Srinagar Tulip Garden: Asia's largest; over 1.5 million tulips
- Integration with apiculture: honey bees improve crop yields AND generate honey income



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