

## **KVK WEST KHASI HILLS OF MEGHALAYA ORGANISED FIRST EVER ‘SOHPHLANG AND NEI SHOW’**

To exhibit the most preferred eatable agro product of tribal people of the Khasi and Jaintia hills the Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVK), West Khasi Hills organized the **first-of-its-kind** ‘*Sohphlang* and Nei Show’ at U Tirot Sing Memorial Hall, Pyndengumiong, Mairang on 14<sup>th</sup> December, 2013.

The event was inaugurated by Shri D. J. Ingti, Director of Horticulture, Govt. of Meghalaya in the presence of Dr. J. K Durong, former Director of Agriculture, Dr. A. K. Tripathy, Principal Scientist and Nodal Officer of KVKs ,ICAR, Shri D. S. Lyngdoh, Joint Director (R&T) cum Nodal Officer, KVKs, Meghalaya, Govt. of Meghalaya, DAO,DHO,SDAO and other officers from West Khasi Hills District and also the village heads of Mairang. The initiative 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 (particularly *Sohphlang*) which is enjoyed by the local people of all ages. The show also aimed to sensitize the farmers about the importance of cultivating these highly priced crops. At present, *Sohphlang* and Nei-lieh fetches market price about Rs. 350/kg and Rs. 300/kg respectively.

Smt. Mariana Dkhar, Programme Co-ordinator, KVK, West Khasi Hills briefed that the concept line of the show is “Love our own, respect that belong to others” because in today’s world, the indigenous practices are gradually neglected and replaced by other products. Hence there is a need to preserve and encourage the farmers specially the rural youths to cultivate traditional high priced crops on a commercial scale. The demand of *Sohphlang* as foodstuff has increased so much that it has been cultivated as a cash crop and although regularly available in the local markets. Although, most of the farming practices for *Sohphlang* involved Jhumming, its cultivation is also possible to in farm land and Jhumming practice can be minimized. KVK, West Khasi Hills is refining the cultivation practice of *Sohphlang* in a more sustainable way which has shown promising results. *Sohphlang* have supported the livelihood of many farmers especially in the winter season across the villages of Meghalaya.

## **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), the basis of which is scientifically validated. The delicate skin is easily peeled off to expose a smooth cream-colored flesh that has a sweet, nut-like flavor. 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 and Khasi hills, 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 which has been ground to a fine paste together with salt.

The show gained momentum after farmers from more than twenty two villages of C & RD Blocks (Mawthadraishan & Mairang) participated enthusiastically and started understanding the wealth of indigenous food in which *Sohphlang* and Nei-lieh has entered a special place. It was also an opportunity for the farmers to market their produce since it was a market day. Realizing the importance of *Sohphlang* farmers, in the years to come, the show will cover more places and the KVK, West Khasi Hills will work together with the DA, DHO of West Khasi Hills in organizing such event in an effort to diversify agricultural crops which is expected to take the farmers to new heights. The ultimate 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.







*Fig. Sohphlang and Nei*