



BREEDING IN TASAR SILKWORM, *ANTHRAEA MYLITTA* DRURY: A REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Tropical tasar silkworm, *Antheraea mylitta* Drury is commercially exploited in India for wild silk production that sustains the livelihood of thousands of poor rural families engaged in tasar culture. Many ecotypes of tasar silkworm are found to thrive in tropical forests where the populations perpetuate on their own, feeding on many types of food plants, thus they being outbred in nature. However, R & D efforts over the years have generated an extensive egg production system as well as package of rearing practices to be followed on systematically developed *Terminalia arjuna* and *T. tomentosa* plantations. Since 1960s, there have been attempts to develop breeds and lines of tasar silkworm and exploit the hybrid vigour. However, till date, large scale utilization of hybrid tasar silkworm remains a dream. This area of work awaits concerted and systematic efforts towards isolation and development of tasar silkworm breeds followed by exploitation of hybrid vigour for a tremendous transformation of the vanya silk production scenario of the country. This review being a comprehensive account of the silkworm breeding efforts undertaken at various pockets of tasar culture in India, may serve as potential background information towards any further serious attempt in this direction.

Key words: *Antheraea mylitta*, breeding, heterosis, hybridization, tasar silkworm.