

# EVALUATION OF HOST PLANT SUITABILITY TO INTRODUCE COMMERCIAL REARING OF TROPICAL TASAR SILKWORM, *ANTHERAEA MYLITTA* IN UTTARAKHAND

Narendra Kumar Bhatia<sup>1\*</sup> and Mohammad Yousuf<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Regional Sericultural Research Station, Central Silk Board, Ministry of Textiles, Govt. of India, Sahaspur 248197, Dehra Dun (Uttarakhand), India.

<sup>2</sup>Forest Entomology Division, Forest Research Institute, New Forest 248006, Dehra Dun (Uttarakhand), India.

\*E-mail:nkb1123@rediffmail.com

## ABSTRACT

*Antheraea mylitta* Drury is a commercially exploited silk producing forest insect thriving in nine tasar producing states of India, but remains still untapped of its potential in Uttarakhand. Experimental rearing of Daba ecorace (BV) of *A. mylitta* was conducted on seven forest tree species at Forest species at Forest Research Institute, Dehra Dun (Uttarakhand) during 2012 to 2014 and data were collected on seven variables to assess the host plant suitability in view of introduction of forest based commercial rearing of *A. mylitta* in Uttarakhand. *Terminalia alata*, *T. tomentosa*, *Lagerstroemia speciosa* and *T. arjuna* were found the best suitable forestry host plants in their order of merit to have better growth and development of *A. mylitta*. Further, SRTM (Shuttle Radar Topography Mission) mapping of Uttarakhand indicated that 321.9 km<sup>2</sup> of forest area distributed up to an altitudinal range of <610 meter in Dehra Dun, Haridwar, Nainital and U.S. Nagar districts of Uttarakhand can be explored for forest based rearing of *A. mylitta*. Accordingly, State Forest Department in association with Directorate of sericulture, Uttarakhand may initiate systematic plantation of these forestry host plants through their various afforestation and plantation schemes to create a new forest insect industry in the state to improve livelihood delivery of the tropical forests.

**Key words:** Forest conservation, Forest silkworm, livelihood improvement, poverty alleviation, vanya silk.