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Contents

VOLUME 7, ISSUE 1, 2026		
No	Editorial	Pages
1	ADAPTATION AND PERFORMANCE OF BINA DEVELOPED BORO RICE VARIETIES ACROSS DIVERSE CROPPING SYSTEMS AND AGRO-ECOLOGICAL ZONES OF BANGLADESH	01-07
2	EVALUATION OF DIRECT SEEDED RICE AND ESTABLISHMENT METHODS OF RICE AND INTEGRATED WEED MANAGEMENT IN AUS, AMAN SEASON ACROSS DIVERS AGRO	08-16
3	ADVANCING GANODERMA MANAGEMENT IN OIL PALM PLANTATIONS: EFFICACY AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY OF "SAWIT SHIELD" BIO-INOCULANT	17-25
4	ABUNDANCE AND BIODIVERSITY OF ARTHROPOD FAUNA IN BRINJAL AGROECOSYSTEMS: AN ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPACTS OF COMMONLY USED INSECTICIDES IN BANGLADESH	26-32
5	OPTIMIZING PENDIMETHALIN DOSES IN WEED MANAGEMENT AND PRODUCTIVITY OF MAJOR LEGUMES: SOYBEAN, CHICKPEA, LENTIL AND MUNGBEAN IN BANGLADESH	33-40

Tropical Agrobiodiversity (TRAB)

Editorial

Agricultural biodiversity is the diversity of crops and their wild relatives, trees, animals, microbes and other species that contribute to agricultural production. This diversity – which results from thousands of years of interactions among people and the environment – is a key component of healthy diets and human health. Food biodiversity is crucial to fight malnutrition and diet-related diseases. A diverse diet increases the likelihood of consuming adequate amounts of the full range of nutrients essential to human health. In agricultural production, agrobiodiversity supports long-term productivity, resilience and multiple ecosystem services, boosting yields in quality and quantity, increasing soil and water quality, and reducing the need for synthetic fertilizers. It also makes farmers' livelihoods more resilient, reducing yield losses due to climate change and pest damage. Broadening the types of cultivated plants is also good for the environment, increasing the abundance of pollinators and beneficial soil organisms, and reducing the risk of pest epidemics. Agricultural biodiversity also keeps open options for unknown future needs, when conserved. This can happen in gene banks as well as on farms, where agrobiodiversity is conserved by using it.

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