

# Red Revolution



The hill state of Uttarakhand is silently scripting a 'red revolution' of sorts on the Himalayan reaches. Growing a lesser known red cereal crop, amaranth, is opening up new vistas for the farmers settled in the upper areas where staple plantations of wheat and paddy are not possible because of extreme climate conditions and mountainous topography.

Amaranth is a traditional fibre-rich plant used in baby food products, breads, etc. for its high protein content and other nutritional values.

In the past two years, international demand for amaranth has risen to the extent that the farmers in the state are unable to meet the supply orders.

"Demand for amaranth is largely from the overseas markets of South Africa and the Netherlands. The cereal is grown only in this state. Even as the area under amaranth cultivation has increased over the years, the demand and supply is a mismatch, perhaps to the advantage of the farmers," said Binita Shah, senior programme manager, Uttarakhand Organic Commodity Board (UOCB).