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**TUMBA AND MATEERA
CULTIVATION IN
THE INDIAN ARID ZONE**

**N. D. YADAV
AND
P. M. SINGH**



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PREFACE

Tumba (*Citrullus colocynthis* (L.) Schrad) and *mateera* (*Citrullus lanatus* Thumb) are important cucurbits of the Indian arid ecosystem. While *mateera* is cultivated, *tumba* grows wildy on sand dunes and sandy plains. *Mateera* fruits are consumed by human beings while *tumba* fruits are used as fodder for livestock. Fortunately seeds of both the cucurbits are rich in oil, though nonedible, which is used in the soap industry and also as lubricant. Thus these cucurbits give an opportunity to harvest economic returns from sand dunes, besides acting as good sand binder. Considerable work on *mateera* and *tumba* has been undertaken at the Regional Research Station of this Institute at Bikaner. I compliment the authors for compiling the available information on these two plants of the desert and I hope the Bulletin will be found useful by both the farmers and researchers.

J. Venkateswarlu
DIRECTOR

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