

## **Annual Report (2023-2024)** **Kalpavriksha, the Botanical Society**

The Department of Botany strives to encourage and motivate students to delve deeper into plant sciences, guiding them towards a path of exploration and discovery. "Kalpavriksha," the dynamic Botanical Society, orchestrates a range of events such as specialised lectures by distinguished scientists and scholars, alumni interaction, workshops, educational trips and diverse competitions related to the realm of Botany. Society focuses on encouraging students to build leadership qualities, team spirit and healthy competition. Despite facing challenging circumstances, this year has been marked by a plethora of engaging activities and events, continuing our tradition of celebrating each year with enthusiasm and vigour.

To commemorate the commencement of the 2023-2024 session, Kalpavriksha hosted its inaugural lecture on October 13, 2023 under the guidance of Dr. Varnika Bhatia (Convener) and Dr. Sujata Sinha (Co-convener). The lecture, centred on the theme 'Mushroom: Fungi with Diverse Applications,' was delivered by esteemed speakers, Dr. Rekha Mehrotra and Dr. Richa Sharma from the Department of Microbiology at Shaheed Rajguru College of Applied Sciences for Women, University of Delhi. Alongside the lecture, students attended a virtual tour to a mushroom cultivation laboratory in the above-said college. The event also served as a platform to introduce the council members of Kalpavriksha for the year 2023-2024. With the dedicated support of both teaching and non-teaching staff, and under the overarching guidance of teacher coordinators, the event concluded triumphantly.



Simultaneously, a poster-making competition on the theme 'Green Revolution Vs. Gene Revolution' was also organised. The competition garnered an impressive turnout, with over 12 participants showcasing their artistic prowess. Students representing diverse disciplines of the college exhibited their creativity through a display of vibrant and thought-provoking posters. The competition results were announced on the same day, with the distinguished Dr. Rekha Mehrotra and Dr. Richa Sharma unveiling the names of the winners.



Kalpavriksha organized a one day educational trip to Hydroponics facility PUSA, New Delhi on 10<sup>th</sup> October, 2023. A total of 40 students of B.Sc. (Hons.) Botany, 4 faculty members and 2 laboratory staff members went for the educational trip. Dr. Murtaza Hasan, Principal Scientist, ICAR-IARI, PUSA, New Delhi interacted with the students and informed them about the various techniques of Hydroponics and the necessary conditions required for this technique. Later his assistant and project manager showed the facility where the Hydroponics technique was used for growing different plants. It was a great learning experience for the students.



Kalpavriksha under the guidance of Dr. Reeta Kumari (Teacher In-Charge) organised a captivating trip to Dalhousie, Khajjiar, and the Chamba District of Himachal Pradesh from November 2 to November 6, 2023. Students from the B.Sc. (Hons.) Botany and B.Sc. Life Science, spanning across the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd years, embarked on this enthralling excursion. During this trip, students visited the majestic Dainkund peak and along the way, collected various plant samples, including *Funaria*, *Pteris*, *Pteridium*, and *Anaphalis margaritacea*. The students also embarked on an enchanting evening excursion to Khajjiar, where they marvelled at the breathtaking Khajjiar Lake, often likened to the 'Mini Switzerland of India.' The mesmerising Chamera Lake View Point and the enchanting Panchpula Waterfall, a natural wonder left the students in awe of nature's splendour. The excursion offered a harmonious blend of nature, culture, and relaxation. Each day brought with it new adventures, from traversing lush landscapes to embracing local customs. The collection of plant samples during the trek added an enriching educational dimension to the memorable journey.



To celebrate Diwali on November 12, 2023, Kalpavriksha hosted "Alpana," a Diya Painting and Deep Rangoli making Competition. Participants were tasked with crafting intricate Rangoli designs, capturing selfies with their creations, and submitting them via a designated Google Form. Enthusiastic students from diverse disciplines and colleges eagerly joined in, showcasing their artistic talents. The event culminated in the distribution of certificates and fantastic prizes to the deserving winners.



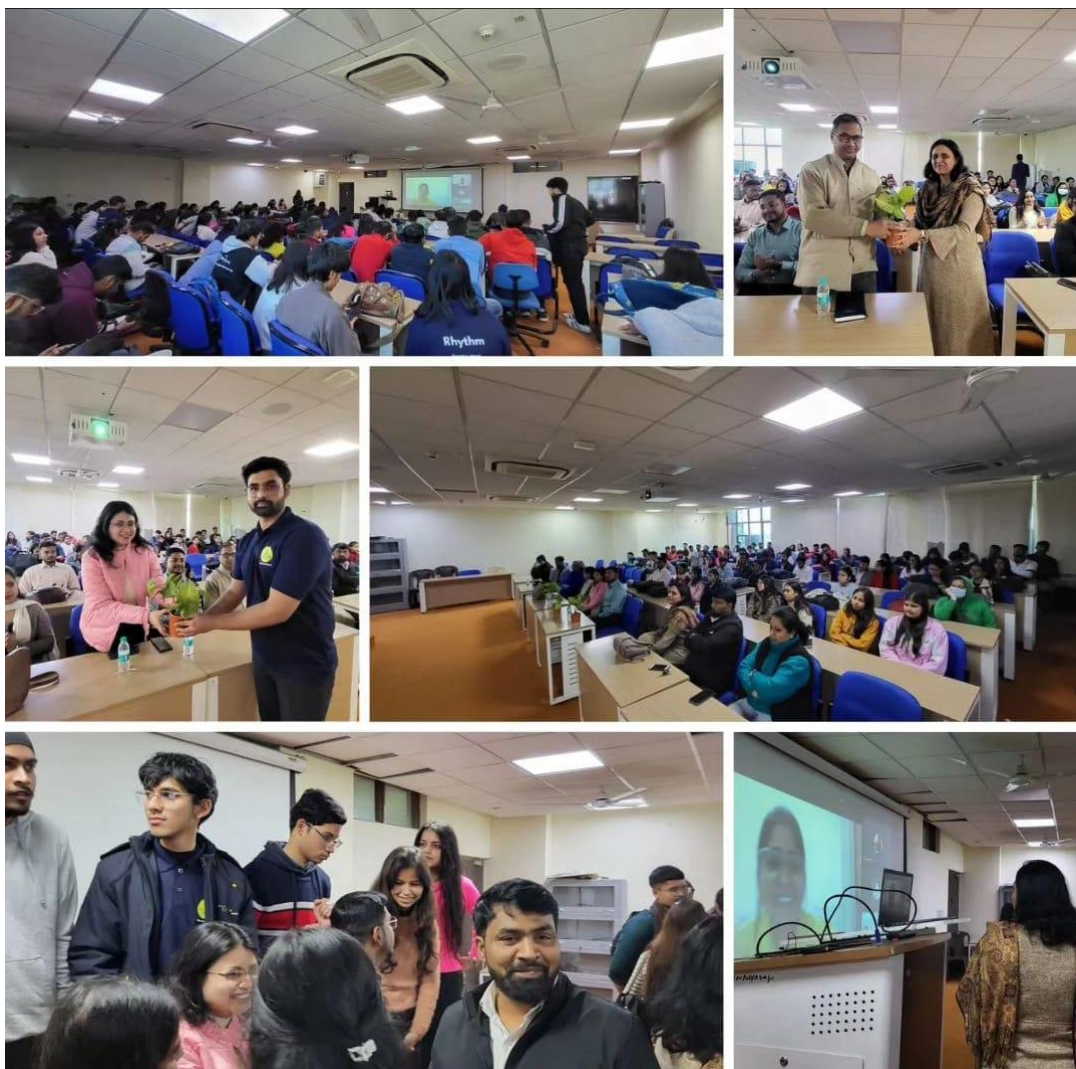
"Floral Fiesta: Transforming Blooms into Artistry," a DIY decor-making competition was held on December 1, 2023. Participants demonstrated their creativity by crafting

stunning decor items using flowers and leaves gathered by them from their surroundings. Six talented individuals showcased their ingenuity through the unique ideas they infused into their artistic creations. The competition concluded with the announcement of results by our Convener, Dr. Varnika Bhatia. Winners were honoured with certificates and exciting prizes as tokens of appreciation for their remarkable achievements.



Kalpavriksha hosted 'Budding Success,' an alumni interaction on February 9, 2024. The event was held in a blended mode where our esteemed alumni shared their experiences with current students. The session commenced with an inaugural address by the Principal, Prof. Hem Chand Jain. In attendance were alumni Ms. Shreya Mahajan (PhD Student, Australian National University, Australia) and Ms. Poonam Nebhnani

(Post-doctoral researcher, Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, Autonomous University of Barcelona, Spain), who joined the session remotely, along with Ms. Riya Pakhre (Research scholar, Department of Environment Studies, University of Delhi) and Mr. Prashant Shaw (Research scholar, Department of Botany, University of Delhi), who attended in person. This blend of virtual and physical presence added depth to the interaction, enabling students to connect with successful alumni from various disciplines. The alumni shared their personal journeys and the obstacles they encountered along the way, inspiring students to persevere in their pursuits. Encouraging the attendees to embrace their passions and explore the diverse realms of biology, they emphasised the importance of dedication and resilience. The session proved to be a memorable experience for the students, who eagerly absorbed the wisdom imparted by the alumni. Their enthusiasm and curiosity were palpable as they engaged with the speakers, eager to glean insights and guidance for their own journeys ahead.



On the occasion of National Science Day i.e. February 28, 2024 Kalpavriksha organised two events – Kalash: Clay Pot Decoration and Kalakriti: Specimen Sketch Off. In Kalash, participants were provided with pots. They decorated the earthen pots with various materials and exhibited impressive creativity. In Kalakriti, each participant was given either live or preserved specimen for sketching in one hour. Students sketched the provided specimen in defined time marvellously.



**FOLIAGE: THE BLOOMING FESTIVAL** was held on March 1, 2024 to celebrate the onset of the spring season. The students showcased their extraordinary talent through various folk dances and classical musical performances. Several art creations, including decorated pots, sketches were exhibited for the audience.



Delonix, the Annual Botanical Festival, unfolded on March 18 and 19, 2024. The event aimed to celebrate the wonders of Plant Sciences while fostering a spirit of learning among participants. The festival commenced with an inaugural ceremony graced by the principal, Prof. Hem Chand Jain, our esteemed guest Dr. Monika Jaggi, Principal Scientist, CSIR-NIScPR, faculty members, and students. The ceremony highlighted the introduction of all the events to be held during the festival.





The festival started with the organization of Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Rolling Shield Inter-College Debate Competition. The debate competition, named in the honour of Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Ji, invited students from various colleges to engage in stimulating discussions on the topic, Traditional knowledge: The Changing Scenario In India. A total of 60 registrations from different courses and colleges were obtained. The participants expressed their views either for or against the motion. The winners were: 1st prize: Shreya Bansal, B.A. (Hons.) Economics, Lashmi Bai College, Univ. of Delhi; 2nd prize: Palak Dwibedi, B.Sc. (Hons.) Botany, Deen Dayal Upadhyaya College, Univ. of Delhi; 3rd prize: Ansh Soni, B.A. (Hons.) Political Science, Ramjas College, Univ. of Delhi.



On Day 2, Scientree: Abhinay Manchhan, a Monoact competition was held. The students showcased their inhabited talent through captivating monoact performances centered on botanical themes. Several students participated in the event. They portrayed plants, flowers and scientists using several props.



The festival marked its impeccable performance in the Flora Quest: Quiz which was an amalgam of theoretical knowledge in the form of a quiz and practical knowledge in the form of finding the said plant or plant part. There were 24 participants and the winners

were announced. In addition to intellectual challenges, Delonix'2024 offered participants a chance to unwind and connect through a series of exciting games.



Kalpavriksha hosted its Valedictory function on April 26, 2024. Dr. Ramcharan Bhattacharya, Director of ICAR - National Institute of Plant Biotechnology, New Delhi delivered the Valedictory lecture on the topic "**Plant Biotechnology for Viksit Bharat: Empowering Farmers, Boosting Crops**". Dr. Bhattacharya acquainted the students about the advancements in the area of plant biotechnology and its pivotal role in empowering Indian farmers and catalysing economic growth. The event garnered enthusiastic participation from students across various departments.

Following the enlightening lecture, trophies and certificates were awarded by our esteemed guest to the student council members of the 2023-24 session, acknowledging their dedication and contribution to the successful management of events throughout the year.

