

## Luxurious Growth of Citronella grass (*Cymbopogon winterianus*) Priang Village, West Jaintia Hills

Citronella (*Cymbopogon winterianus*) is a perennial aromatic grass valued for its essential oil, which is extracted through the process of hydro-distillation. The oil contains important aromatic compounds such as citronellol, citronellal, and geraniol. These compounds are widely used in the manufacture of antiseptic creams, mosquito repellents such as Odomos, soaps, perfumes, and various cosmetic and pharmaceutical products. Due to its high commercial value and increasing market demand, citronella cultivation has emerged as a promising livelihood activity for rural communities.

Recognising its economic potential, the Iahluti Self Help Group (SHG) initiated citronella cultivation in Priang Village, West Jaintia Hills, with plantation activities covering one hectare of land under the support of the Megh Aroma Mission during the year 2005. The SHG demonstrated strong commitment and dedication towards the successful implementation of the project. Within one year of cultivation, the group achieved encouraging results, which motivated them to expand the plantation area from one hectare to nearly two to three hectares of land.

The successful progress of the initiative also enabled the SHG to contribute towards the promotion of aromatic crop cultivation in nearby villages. During the same year, the SHG supplied approximately 1,05,833 citronella slips to Saba Village for the establishment of aromatic plantations under the Meghlife project plantation. This marked an important step in extending livelihood opportunities and promoting sustainable agricultural practices in the region.

Observing the sincere efforts and remarkable progress made by the SHG, the INR team of the Meghalaya Basin Development Authority (MBDA) extended further support to strengthen the

initiative. As part of the second phase of assistance, the team provided a 500 kg field distillation unit (FDU) in March 2026 for the extraction of citronella oil. The establishment of the distillation unit significantly enhanced the value addition process by enabling local extraction and processing of essential oil within the village itself.

This intervention not only improved the sustainability of citronella cultivation but also created better income-generating opportunities for nearby stakeholders and beneficiaries. The initiative has contributed towards rural livelihood development, employment generation, and the promotion of aromatic crop-based entrepreneurship in the region.





