

# Proposed State tree for Union Territory of Ladakh

## *Juniper polycarpus* (Vernacular Names: *Shuk-pa*)

*Juniperus polycarpus* C. Koch (syn. *J. excelsa* sub sp. *polycarpus* (C.Koch) Takht; *Juniperus macropoda* Boiss. also referred as *Juniperus semiglobosa* Regel) from Cupressaceae family, is commonly known as “Himalayan pencil cedar” and locally as ‘*Shuk-pa*’.

This tree is confined to the dry arid tracts of Western and North-Western Himalaya between 2800 – 3800 m above sea level. This tree is the most important representative of the genus *Juniperus* in the Indian Trans-Himalayas. It is adapted to grow in extremely harsh climatic conditions. There are only few relict patches of *Shuk-pa* now in Ladakh which are considered the representatives of ancient ‘Steppe Forests’. This tree has immense socio-cultural and religious significance for the local communities in the Ladakh region. Juniper is also used as medicine in *Sowa-Rigpa* system of medicine for treating throat inflammation, spleen disorder, uterus disorder, serum in joint and stiffness of limbs etc.

The populations of *Shuk-pa* is declining in Ladakh largely due to low germination of seeds, trampling of seedlings by animals and over exploitation. It is assessed as one of the Endangered plant in the CAMP workshop of 2021.

Considering ecological, economic and cultural significance of *Juniperus polycarpus*. Declaration of this species as the state tree of Union Territory of Ladakh will increase awareness and popularity of tree among the locals and will highlight the significance of *Juniper* in Ladakhi society. It will also strengthen the conservation efforts to save and multiply *Juniper* trees. If planted on large scale, it will add more scenic beauty to the beautiful landscape of Ladakh

If any suggestion or comments please write before 07<sup>th</sup> January 2023 to Dr. Padma Gurmet, Chairman, State Tree and Flower Committee, U.T Ladakh at Email: [nrisr.leh@gmail.com](mailto:nrisr.leh@gmail.com) with subject State tree and flower

