

interest.

Horticulture

1. **Horticulture production**, including fruits and vegetables, in **2016-17** **outstripped food grain** output for the fifth year in a row. Horticulture now accounts for more than **one-third** of the agriculture sector's GDP.
2. **Potential of Horticulture sector**
 1. Many horticulture crops are **short duration** crops, and **grown in small plots** of land, hence **small and marginal farmers** now prefer to grow them.
 2. It is **highly productive**. Horticultural harvest of 295 million tonnes has been gathered from **just one-fifth of the area** under food grain is a significant aspect.
 3. **Horticulture is highly labour intensive** and availability of cheap labour and **less capital input requirements** are suitable for poor farmers. Even it is less susceptible to bad monsoon.
 4. These crops ensure a **quicker cash** flow, unlike say, pulses, which may take more than six months from sowing to marketing.
 5. Horticulture has expanded in the areas which had been **slow to adopt green revolution technologies**.
 6. **Better incomes, urbanisation**, changing consumption and lifestyle patterns have driven demand of fruits, vegetables, mushrooms, **medicinal plants** and flowers which is addressed by small farms near cities.
3. **Challenges in realisation of full potential**
 1. **Lack of market support** and paucity of post-harvest produce management chain from farm to fork. **Distress sales** and mass destruction due to improper post-harvest handling like **cold storage** and want of processing facilities, lack of refrigerated vehicles to transport.
 2. The **lack of availability of quality planting material**, specially processable and exportable varieties, has been another area of concern.
 3. The **wastage** for horticulture crops is between 5 to 15 percent due to **high perishability** in the case of fruits and vegetables.