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Editorial

Preface of the 9th International Horticulture Conference & Expo: Horticultural Transformation for Sustainable Food Safety and Security

Muhammad Azam Khan [1,*], Muhammad Naveed Anjum [2,*], Umer Habib [1], Saddam Hussain [3,*], M. Tahir Akram [1] and Rashid Mehmood Rana [4]

[1] Department of Horticulture, PMAS-Arid Agriculture University, Rawalpindi 46300, Pakistan; umer@uaar.edu.pk (U.H.); tahirakram786@uaar.edu.pk (M.T.A.)
[2] Department of Land and Water Conservation Engineering, PMAS-Arid Agriculture University, Rawalpindi 46300, Pakistan
[3] Department of Agricultural and Biological Engineering, Institute of Food and Agricultural Science (IFAS), Tropical Research and Education Center (TREC), University of Florida, Homestead, FL 33031, USA
[4] Department of Plant Breeding & Genetics, PMAS-Arid Agriculture University, Rawalpindi 46300, Pakistan; rashid.pbg@uaar.edu.pk
* Correspondence: drazam1980@uaar.edu.pk (M.A.K.); naveedwre@uaar.edu.pk (M.N.A.); s.hussain@ufl.edu (S.H.)

1. Introduction

The 9th International Horticulture Conference (IHC-2025) was held at PMAS Arid Agriculture University, Rawalpindi, Pakistan, from 15 to 17 April 2025. The conference was organized by the Pakistan Society for Horticultural Sciences. It served as an international forum for sharing research, ideas, and innovation in horticulture under the theme "Transformation, Sustainable Food Safety and Security."

The conference brought together scientists, researchers, industry professionals, and students from across Pakistan, as well as from several other countries, including Turkey, Nigeria, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, and China. More than 300 abstracts were submitted, reflecting strong national and international interest. Alongside the scientific sessions, an industrial expo and a spring flower show were organized, adding practical and visual value to the event.

The scientific program covered 12 thematic areas representing key sectors of horticulture. The program included eight parallel scientific sessions and one panel discussion. A total of 120 oral presentations were delivered, highlighting recent advances in horticulture and allied disciplines. In addition, more than 80 posters were presented.

1.1. Organizers

- **Patron-in-Chief:** Prof. Dr. Qamar Uz Zaman, Vice Chancellor, PMAS-AAUR
- **Patron:** Dr. Tariq Mukhtar, Dean, Faculty of Agriculture, PMAS-AAUR
- **Chief Organizer:** Prof. Dr. Muhammad Azam Khan, President, Pakistan Society for Horticultural Sciences (PSHS)
- **Organizer:** Dr. Imran Hassan, Chairman, Department of Horticulture, PMAS-AAUR
- **Secretary:** Dr. Umer Habib, General Secretary, PSHS

1.2. Committee

1.2.1. Patronage Committee

- Prof. (Rtd.) Dr. Rana Aslam Khan

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- Dr. Muhamamd Javed Khan Tareen
- Dr. Waqar Ahmed

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- Dr. Adnan Shahid (UFL-USA)
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- Dr. Saddam Hussain (UF-TREC-USA)

1.2.3. Organizing Committee

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- Prof. Dr. Saba Ambreen Memon, Chairperson Horticulture, SAU, Tandojam
- Prof. Dr. Safina Naz Chairman, Horticulture, Bahauddin Zakariya University, Multan
- Dr. Kashif Razaq, Chairman Horticulture, MNS-University of Agriculture, Multan
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- Dr. Syed Ijaz-Ul-Hassan, Director, Potato Research Institute, Sahiwal
- Dr. Waseem, Director ORIC, Haripur University, Haripur

1.2.4. Management Committee

- Dr. Touqeer Ahmad, Associate Professor
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- Dr. Mehwish Liaqat, Assistant Professor

- Dr. Tanvir Hussain, Assistant Professor
- Dr. Usman Ali Abbasi, Assistant Professor
- Ms. Ismara Naseem, Lecturer
- Mr. Usman Qureshi, Lecturer

1.3. Scopes and Topics

- Breeding genetics and genomics: Climate Resilient Horticulture
- Precision Tech & Climate Smart Innovations in Horticulture
- Biodiversity in Horticulture: Conservation & Utilization
- Protected Cultivation of Horticultural Crops
- Vertical Farming & Urban Horticulture
- Innovative Strategies for Plant Propagation
- Nutrient & Water Management
- Integrated Disease & Pest Management
- Landscape Design & Amenity Horticulture
- Regenerative Horticulture
- ostharvest Technology & Supply Chain Management
- Horticulture Business & Entrepreneurship

2. Program and Schedule

2.1. Inaugural Ceremony

The schedule of the inaugural ceremony is presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1. 15 April 2025 | 09:00 a.m. | University Auditorium.

09:00 a.m.	Registration and Seating of the Participants
10:00 a.m.	Recitation
10:05 a.m.	Naat-e-Rasool
10:10 a.m.	National Anthem
10:15 a.m.	PSHS Recap
10:20 a.m.	Welcome Address by Prof. Dr. Muhammad Azam Khan (President PSHS)
10:25 a.m.	Keynote Talk by Dr. Waqar Ahmad, Sector Advisor/Consultant
10:40 a.m.	Technical Talk by Dr. Adnan Shahid, Associate Professor, UFL, USA
10:55 a.m.	Address by the Guest of Honour Ms. Florence Rolle, FAO
11:05 a.m.	Address by the Guest of Honour Prof. Dr. Mukhtar Ahmad, Chairman HEC
11:15 a.m.	Address by the Chief Guest Honarable Rana Tanveer Hussain, Federal Minister NFS&R
11:30 a.m.	Souvenir exchange
11:45 a.m.	Vote of Thanks by The Vice Chancellor, PMAS-AAUR
11:50 a.m.	Group Photo
11:55 a.m.	Inauguration of Flower Show and Expo
12:00 p.m.	Lunch & Prayer Break

2.2. Day-1: Technical Session-I

- **Theme:** Breeding, Genetics & Genomics: Climate Resilient Horticulture (Table 2)

Table 2. First technical session presenter names with their presentation titles. 15 April 2025 | 02:00–04:00 p.m. | Agriculture Seminar Room.

Presenter Name	Presentation Title
Dr. Shoukat Ali	Genetic Improvement of Vegetable Crops through New Breeding Tools
Prof. Dr. Muhamamd Usman	Germplasm Diversification and Unlocking Genetic Potential of Fruit Crops
Dr. Muhammad Shafiq	Unlocking the Potential of Gene Silencing Based Resistance Bullets Against Chilli Leaf Curl Disease Complex
Dr. Xuemei Xiao	Flavor Evaluation of Chinese Chive Germplasm Resources via HS-SPME/GC-MS and Electronic Nose Technology
Mr. Muneeb Munawar	Utilizing Heat Stress Indices for Selecting Heat-Tolerant Genetic Male Sterile Genotypes in Chilli
Dr. Saba Haider	Recent Advances in Plant Biotechnology for Sustainable and Climate-Resilient Horticulture
Dr. Naseem Sharif	Morphological and Genetic Characterization of Pakistani Jujube Genetic Resources
Ms. Arooge Fatima	Physiological and Biochemical Responses of Irradiated Germplasm in Acid Limes
Mr. Muhammad Hammad	Genome Wide Analysis of Carica Papaya
Mr. Ali Raza Jamali	Performance of Different Gladiolus Varieties on Growth and Flowering Attributes under Agroecological Conditions of Tandojam
Mr. Mubashir Amin	Effect of Different Growing Media on Growth and Flowering of Hollyhock (*Althea rosea* L.)
Mr. Muhammad Adnan Raza	Identification and Analysis of Abiotic Stress-Responsive bHLH Gene Family in Brassica oleracea
Dr. Tazien Bukhari	Validation of SSR Markers for Identification of High-Yielding and Phytophthora Capsici Root Rot Resistant Chilli Genotypes

- **Chair:** Dr. Arif Atak
- **Co-Chair:** Dr. Zahoor Hussain
- **Moderator:** Dr. Usman Ali Abbasi

2.3. Day-1: Technical Session-II

- **Theme:** Precision Tech. & Climate-Smart Innovations in Horticulture; Protected Cultivation of Horticultural Crops (Table 3)

Table 3. Second technical session presenter names with their presentation titles. 15 April 2025 | 02:00–04:00 p.m. | PKCBC Seminar Room.

Presenter Name	Presentation Title
Dr. Liaquat Ali Khan	Overview of Green AI
Prof. Dr. Mobushir Riaz Khan	Geospatial Intelligence; Transforming Horticulture for a Sustainable Future
Dr. Naveed Tahir	Overview of Green Cabin Hydroponic Vegetable Production and Automation

Table 3. *Cont.*

Presenter Name	Presentation Title
Dr. Hafiz Nazar Faried	Potassium Enrichment Enhances Capsicum Productivity through Modification of Ionic Contents, Physiological and Secondary Metabolites Under Partially Controlled Greenhouse
Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed	Simulation of Climate Change Impact on Potato Cropping System Under Semi-arid Environment and Designing of Adaptation Strategies
Dr. Muhammad Sarwar Yaqub	Effect of Different Growing Media on Seed Germination and Seedling Growth of Tomato, Cucumber and Lettuce
Mr. Atta Ullah	Effect of Different Mulching Materials on Tomato Hybrids in Walk-in Tunnel under the Agro-climatic Conditions of Dera Ismail Khan
Ms. Afifa Talpur	Effect of Biostimulant on the Growth, Quality and Yield of Tomato (*Lycopersicon esculentum*)
Dr. Adnan Zahid	Nanoparticle-Mediated Salinity Stress Alleviation in Tomato Plants: A Green Technology Solution

- **Chair:** Dr. Liaquat Ali Khan
- **Co-Chair:** Dr. Muhammad Azam Khan
- **Moderator:** Dr. Ismara Naseem

2.4. Day-2: Technical Session-III

- **Theme:** Post-Harvest Technology and Supply Chain Management (Table 4)

Table 4. Third technical session presenter names with their presentation titles. 16 April 2025 | 09:00–10:30 a.m. | Agriculture Seminar Room.

Presenter Name	Presentation Title
Prof. Dr. Ahmad Sattar Khan	Role of Postharvest Horticulture in Food Safety and Security
Dr. Rizwan Mehmood	Beyond the Fruit: A Strategic Lens on Banana Value Chain Gaps and Innovations in Pakistan
Dr. Asif Ahmad Prof. Dr. Muhammad Nafees	Food Safety Issues in Pakistan: Challenges and Solutions Recent Advances in Postharvest Management of Fruits and Vegetables at IUB
Dr. Raheel Anwar	Improving Citrus Value Chains in Pakistan through Research and Development with Small-Scale Growers and Industry Stakeholders
Dr. Muhammad Amin	Managing Horticultural Crop Waste for Global Sustainability-An Introduction to Asia-Pacific Postharvest Network
Dr. Noosheen Zahid	Tailoring Cultivar-Specific Strawberry Nursery Practices: Evaluating Runner Health and Yield Potential in Diverse Climates of Poonch District
Ms. Tazkia Hussain	Optimal Production and Postharvest Handling Protocols for China Aster (*Callistephus chinensis* L.)–A Newly Emerging Specialty Cut Flower
Ms. Maha Sohail	Postharvest Application of Aloe Vera Gel Coating Improves Storage Life and Maintains Quality of Loquat Fruit
Ms. Arooba Abbas	Postharvest Low Temperature Quarantine Treatment Influences Storage Life and Quality of Kinnow Mandarin Fruit
Ms. Kainatt Naeem	Physico-Chemical Characterization of Selected Sweet Orange (*Citrus sinensis*) Cultivars Grown in Taxila-Khanpur Valley

- **Chair:** Prof. Dr. Aman Ullah Malik
- **Co-Chair:** Dr. Munawar Raza Kazmi
- **Moderator:** Dr. Usman Ali Abbasi

2.5. Day-2: Technical Session-IV

- **Theme:** Horticulture Business and Entrepreneurship (Table 5)

Table 5. Fourth technical session presents names with their presentation titles. 16 April 2025 | 09:00–10:30 a.m. | PKCBC Seminar Room.

Presenter Name	Presentation Title
Mr. Athar Hussain Khokhar	CEO PHDEC
Dr. Siti Zaharah Sakimin	UPM's Food Security Blueprint: Providing Impact to the Nation
Dr. Gohar Ayub	Current Status and Future Prospects of Certified Fruit Nurseries in KPK
Prof. Dr. Zahoor Hussain	Status of Citrus Industry of Pakistan and Causes of Low Production in the Citrus
Dr. Ijaz Hussain	Ensuring Quality and True to Type Stone Fruit Nursery Production: A Key to Sustainable Horticulture and Fruit Industry Development
Ms. Sana Hayyat	Effect of Trellis System on Wild Black Raspberry Growth, Yield and Fruit Quality
Ms. Khadija Ali	Plant Tissue Culture Industry: Market Analysis, Growth and Potential Business Opportunities
Ms. Hoorain Javaid	Analyzing the Market Trends of Imported Ornamental Plants in Pakistan
Dr. Muhammad Riaz Khan	Morphological and Biochemical Characterization of Apple Varieties from Dhirkot, AJ&K
Ms. Sania Sajjad	Transformation of Horticulture Market with Innovation and New Potential Varieties through Genetic Modification and Tissue Culture Technique

- **Chair:** Prof. Dr. Iftikhar Ahmad
- **Co-Chair:** PHDEC representative
- **Moderator:** Dr. Ismara Naseem

2.6. Day-2: Technical Session-V

- **Theme:** Nutrient and Water Management; Integrated Pest Management (Table 6)

Table 6. Fifth technical session presenter names with their presentation titles. 16 April 2025 | 11:00 a.m.–12:30 p.m. | Agriculture Seminar Room.

Presenter Name	Presentation Title
Dr. Yaro Hadiza	Correlation and Path Coefficient Analysis for Some Growth and Yield-Related Traits in Tomata (*Solanum lycopersicum* L.)
Mr. Ismail Iberahim	Enforcement for Illegal Pesticide for Safety and Food Security
Dr. Muhammad Naeem Aslam	Access to CABI Digital Tools for the Management of Evolving Plant Health Threats to Ensure Food Security and Safety

Table 6. *Cont.*

Presenter Name	Presentation Title
Prof. Dr. Muhammad Sajid	Integrated Nutrient Management for Sustainable Apple Production and Quality Enhancement at High Altitude Temperate Zone (Swat)
Dr. Muhammad Bilal Chattha	Evaluating the Effects of Various Agricultural Practices on the Growth, Yield, and Quality of Potatoes (*Solanum tuberosum* L.) for the Chipping Industry
Dr. Muhammad Azher Nawaz	Rootstocks Improve the Nutrient Use Efficiency of Vegetable Crops
Dr. Muhammad Waseem	Co-application of Copper Nanoparticles and Metal Tolerant *Bacillus* sp. for Improving Growth of Spinach Plants in Chromium Contaminated Soil
Dr. Muhammad Rizwan	Effect of Green Synthesized Zinc-Oxide Nanoparticles on Growth and Lead Uptake in Food Crops
Dr. Ibrar Hussain	Coping of Climate Change in Annually Twice Crop Producing Brazilian Hybrid Grapes through Exogenous Abscisic Acid Application
Ms. Rehana Bibi	Diversity of Aphid Fauna in District Dera Ghazi Khan
Ms. Ahtsham Hussain	Effect of Supplemental Foliar-Applied Boron on Tree Health, Fruit Quality Development at Harvest and Shelf-Life of Huanglongbing-Affected Mandarin Kinnow
Mr. Muhammad Rehman	Evaluation of Seed Germination and Growth Response of Zinnia (*Zinnia elegans*) Genotype Salt Stress
Mr. Asad Ali	Potential of Foliar-Applied Gibberellic Acid and Seaweed Extract to Improve Tree Health and Fruit Productivity in Huanglongbing–Affected Mandarin 'Kinnow'

- **Chair:** Prof. Dr. Muhammad Usman
- **Co-Chair:** Dr. Noshin Ilyas
- **Moderator:** Dr. Usman Ali Abbasi

2.7. Day-2: Technical Session-VI

- **Theme:** Landscape Design and Amenity Horticulture; Regenerative Horticulture (Table 7)

Table 7. Sixth technical session presenter names with their presentation titles. 16 April 2025 | 11:00 a.m.–12:30 p.m. | PKCBC Seminar Room.

Presenter Name	Presentation Title
Dr. Sudarshanee Geekiyanage	Flower Diversity of Butterfly Pea (*Clitoria ternatea*) from Matara District, Sri Lanka, and Breeding Novel Flower Phenotypes
Dr. Zia-ur-Rehman Mashwani	Unleashing *Caralluma tuberculatas* Potential: How Light Regime and Selenium Nanoparticles Boost Antioxidants and Hypoglycemic Bioactivities
Dr. Maria Naqve	In Vitro Propagation of Stevia to Increase Leaf and Root Growth Using Murashige and Skoog Culture Media
Ms. Tazkia Hussain	Optimal Production and Postharvest Handling Protocols for China Aster (*Callistephus chinensis* L.)-A Newly Emerging Specialty Cut Flower
Ms. Urwa Irshad	Annual Flowers Seed Pelleting and Coating Enhance Uniform Seedling Growth and Value Addition

Table 7. *Cont.*

Presenter Name	Presentation Title
Ms. Ayesha Jabeen	Vase Life Optimization of *Matthiola incana* L. through various Harvest and Postharvest Handling Procedures
Mr. Muzamil Farooque Jamali	Epicotyl Grafting: An Efficient Multiplication Technique in Mango (*Mangifera indica* L.)
Ms. Faiza Qadir	Fragrance and Form: Unveiling the Potential of Rosa 'Gruss an Teplitz' Hybrids
Mr. Muhammad Abdullah Khan	Shaping the Future Landscapes in a Water Scarce Environment
Mr. Asif Ali Hajano	Response of Different Nitrogen Doses on Growth and Flowering of Ornamental Sunflower (*Helianthus annuus* L.)

- **Chair:** Dr. Yaro Hadiza
- **Co-Chair:** Dr. Mehdi Maqbool
- **Moderator:** Dr. Ismara Naseem

2.8. Day-2: Technical Session-VII

- **Theme:** Biodiversity in Horticulture Conservation and Utilization Innovative Strategies in Plant Propagation (Table 8)

Table 8. Seventh technical session presenter names with their presentation titles. 16 April 2025 | 02:00–03:00 p.m. | University Auditorium.

Presenter Name	Technical Presentation Titles
Dr. Arif Atak	Development of New Superior Quality Grape Varieties with Embryo Rescue Method
Dr. Mehdi Maqbool	From Research to Action: Value Chains for Sustaining Nutrition in a Changing Climate
Prof. Dr. Iftikhar Ahmad	Innovations in Global Floriculture & Prospects for Pakistan
Dr. Muhammad Ramzan Anser	Futuristic Road Map of Olive Sector Development in Pakistan

- **Chair:** Prof. Dr. Akbar Anjum
- **Co-Chair:** Prof. Dr. Ahmad Sattar Khan
- **Moderator:** Dr. Umer Habib

2.8.1. Panel Discussion

The schedule of the panel discussion is provided in Table 9 below.

Table 9. Panelists for the panel discussion on high-value horticultural crops for farming prosperity in the future. 16 April 2025 | 03:00–04:00 p.m. | University Auditorium.

Topic	High Value Horticultural Crops: Future for Farmer Prosperity
Moderator	Dr. Umer Habib
Panelists	Dr. Iqrar A. Khan (S.I., H.I.), Professor Emeritus Horticulture, UAF Dr. Abid Qayyum Suleri (Executive Director, SDPI) Dr. Yaro Hadiza (Country Manager, East West Seed International, Nigeria) Mr. Javaid Firoz (CEO, Shahjahan Farms Pvt. Ltd.) Dr. Waqar Ahmad (Sector Advisor/Consultant)

2.8.2. Concluding Ceremony

The schedule of the concluding ceremony is provided in Table 10 below.

Table 10. Program details for concluding ceremony. 16 April 2025 | 04:00–05:00 p.m. | University Auditorium.

04:00 p.m.	Qirat with Translation
04:05 p.m.	Conference Recommendations by Prof. Dr. Aman Ullah Malik
04:15 p.m.	Horticulture Policy Talk by Dr. Iqrar A. Khan, Professor Emeritus
04:25 p.m.	Address by the Chief Guest
04:35 p.m.	Shield Distribution
04:50 p.m.	Concluding Remarks
05:00 p.m.	Refreshment

3. Keynote Speakers

Details of foreigner participants/speakers can be found below (Table 11).

Table 11. Foreigner participants/speakers.

1	**Dr. Arif Atak** Assoc. Prof. Department of Horticulture, Bursa Uludağ University, Turkey Vice-Chair of ISHS Vine and Berry Fruits Division arifatak@uludag.edu.tr **Title:** Current Berry Production in the World: Sustainability, Climate Change, and Trade
2	**Dr. Muhammad Adnan Shahid** Assistant Professor/Ecophysiology of Fruit Crops, University of Florida, USA mshahid@ufl.edu **Title:** Silicon: A Beneficial Nutrient for Specialty Crop
3	**Professor Dr. Sudarshanee Geekiyanage** Faculty of Agriculture, University of Ruhuna, Mapalana, Kamburupitiya, Sri Lanka sudarshanee@agbio.ruh.ac.lk **Title:** Flower Diversity of Butterfly Pea (*Clitoria ternatea*) from Matara District, Sri Lanka, and Breeding Novel Flower Phenotypes
4	**Professor Dr. Xuemei Xiao** Gansu Agricultural University, China xiaoxm@gsau.edu.cn **Title:** Flavor Evaluation of Chinese Chive Germplasm Resources Via HS-SPME/GC-MS and Electronic Nose Technology
5	**Dr. Yaro Khadiza** Department of Agronomy, Ahmadu Bello University, Nigeria degirlaa@gmail.com **Title:** Correlation and Path Coefficient Analysis for Some Growth and Yield-Related Traits in Tomata (*Solanum lycopersicum* L.)
6	**Mr. Mahmood Ul Hassan** Horticulture–School of Science, Edith Cowan University, Australia mahmoodulhassan1947@gmail.com **Title:** Novel Use of Plant Growth Regulators to Regulate the on Tree Fruit Ripening, Maintain Quality, and Expand Market Window of Australian Grown Sweet Persimmon
7	**Dr. Sandeep Singh** Principal Entomologist (Fruits) Department of Fruit Science, Punjab Agricultural University, India sandeep_pau.1974@pau.edu **Title:** Biodiversity and Integrated Management of Fruit Flies on Fruit Crops

Table 11. *Cont.*

8	**Mr. Ismail Iberahim** Director, Integrated Agriculture Development Area, Malaysia ismailibrahim@doa.gov.my **Title:** Enforcement for Illegal Pesticide for Safety and Food Security
9	**Prof. Dr. Mobushir Riaz Khan** Charles Sturt University, Australia mobkhan@csu.edu.au **Title:** Geospatial Intelligence; Transforming Horticulture for a Sustainable Future
10	**Dr. Dmitrii Gladkov** Director, Rijder CIS LLC, Russia ru.rijder@gmail.com **Title:** Efficiency of the Organization of the Tomato Breeding Process
11	**Dr. Siti Zaharah Sakimin** Department of Crop Science, Faculty of Agriculture, Universiti Putra Malaysia szaharah@upm.edu.my **Title:** UPM's Food Security Blueprint: Providing Impact to the Nation

Details of national participants can be found below (Table 12).

Table 12. National participants.

1	**Prof. Dr. Ahmad Sattar Khan** Director, Institute of Horticultural Sciences University of Agriculture, Faisalabad, Pakistan askhan@uaf.edu.pk **Title:** Role of Postharvest Horticulture in Food Safety and Security
2	**Prof. Dr. Shahjahan Shabbir Ahmed** Department of Biotechnology BUITEMs, Quetta shahjahan.shabbir@buitms.edu.pk **Title:** Expression Profiling of Heat Shock Protein Genes in Indigenous Lettuce (*Lactuca sativa* L.)
3	**Dr. Zahoor Hussain** Chairperson Department of Horticulture Ghazi University, Dera Ghazi Khan zhussain@gudgk.edu.pk **Title:** Status of Citrus Industry of Pakistan and Causes of Low Production in the Citrus
4	**Prof. Dr. Gohar Ayub** Chairperson Department of Horticulture The University of Agriculture, Peshawar gohar.ayub@aup.edu.pk **Title:** Current Status and Future Prospects of Certified Fruit Nurseries in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa
5	**Dr. Ibrar Hussain** Senior Research Officer Agriculture Res. Institute, Tarnab, Peshawar ibrar_horti@yahoo.com **Title:** Coping of Climate Change in Annually Twice Crop Producing Brazilian Hybrid Grapes through Exogenous Abscisic Acid Application

Table 12. *Cont.*

6	**Prof. Dr. Iftikhar Ahmad** Institute of Horticultural Sciences University of Agriculture, Faisalabad iahmad@uaf.edu.pk **Title:** Innovations in Global Floriculture & Prospects for Pakistan
7	**Dr. Mehdi Maqbool** Chairperson Department of Horticulture University of Poonch, Rawalakot mehdimaqbool@upr.edu.pk **Title:** From Research to Action: Value Chains for Sustaining Nutrition in a Changing Climate
8	**Prof. Dr. Muhammad Sajid** Department of Horticulture The University of Agriculture Peshawar msajid@aup.edu.pk **Title:** Integrated Nutrient Management for Sustainable Apple Production and Quality Enhancement at High Altitude Temperate Zone (Swat)
9	**Prof. Dr. Nazeer Ahmed** Dean of Graduate Studies, Department of Biotechnology BUITEMS, Quetta nazeer.ahmed@buitms.edu.pk **Title:** Transforming Biodiversity Studies in Agriculture: The Role of DNA Barcoding and Meta-barcoding
10	**Prof. Dr. Rashad Mukhtar Balal** Chairperson Department of Horticulture College of Agriculture, Uni. of Sargodha rmb@uos.edu.pk **Title:** Exploring the Role of Neurotransmitters Foliar Spray in Mitigating Salinity Stress in Tomato (*Solanum lycopersicum* L.) Crop
11	**Prof. Dr. Muhammad Nafees** Chairperson Department of Horticultural Sciences The Islamia University of Bahawalpur muhammad.nafees@iub.edu.pk **Title:** Recent Advances in Postharvest Management of Fruits and Vegetables at IUB
12	**Dr. Muhammad Shafiq** Institute of Agricultural Sciences, University of the Punjab, Lahore **Title:** Exploration and Identification of the Unfolded Protein Response during Begomovirus Infection in Cucumber
13	**Prof. Dr. Muhamamd Usman** Plant Tissue Culture Cell Institute of Horticultural Sciences University of Agriculture, Faisalabad m.usman@uaf.edu.pk **Title:** Germplasm Diversification and Unlocking Genetic Potential of Fruit Crops
14	**Dr. Muhammad Naeem Aslam** Country Coordinator, Plantwise Plus CABI, Pakistan n.aslam@cabi.org **Title:** Access to CABI Digital Tools for the Management of Evolving Plant Health Threats to Ensure Food Security And Safety

Table 12. *Cont.*

15	**Dr. Ijaz Hussain** Chairperson Department of Horticulture The University of Haripur, Haripur ijazhussain1@uoh.edu.pk **Title:** Ensuring Quality and True to Type Stone Fruit Nursery Production: A Key to Sustainable Horticulture and Fruit Industry Development
16	**Dr. Tanveer Ahmad** Department of Horticulture MNS University of Agriculture, Multan tanveer.ahmad@mnsuam.edu.pk **Title:** Prospects of Coffee Cultivation in Pakistan
17	**Dr. Muhammad Amin** Department of Horticultural Sciences, The Islamia University of Bahawalpur m.amin@iub.edu.pk **Title:** Managing Horticultural Crop Waste for Global Sustainability-An Introduction to Asia-Pacific Postharvest Network
18	**Dr. Shoukat Ali** Director, NIGAB NARC, Islamabad Shaukat_parc@yahoo.co.in **Title:** Genetic improvement of Vegetable Crops through New Breeding Tools
19	**Dr. Muhammad Ramzan Anser** Director/Principal Scientist Centre of Excellence for Olive Research and Training (CEFORT) Chakwal cefortpak@yahoo.com **Title:** Futuristic Road Map of Olive Sector Development in Pakistan
20	**Dr. Muhammad Waseem** Department of Environmental Sciences Government College University Faisalabad Faisalabad 38000, Pakistan muhammad.waseem@gcuf.edu.pk **Title:** Co-application of Copper Nanoparticles and Metal Tolerant *Bacillus* sp. for Improving Growth of Spinach Plants in Chromium Contaminated Soil

4. Sponsors

- Oil and Gas Development Company
- Green AI: Precision Agriculture with Aerospace & AI Technologies
- Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research
- Higher Education Commission Islamabad
- Jadeed Group
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- The National Horticultural Society of Pakistan
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- CABI, Pakistan
- Pakistan Horticultural Development and Export Company
- Pakistan Science Foundation
- Federal Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education Islamabad
- Fatima Fertilizer Company Limited
- Akora Seed Company
- Manuchar Agro
- National Seed Company

5. Peer Review Criteria and Process

In submitting conference proceedings to *Biology and Life Sciences Forum*, the volume editors of the proceedings certify to the publisher that all papers published in this volume have been subjected to peer review administered by the volume editors. Reviews were conducted by expert referees based on the professional and scientific standards expected of a proceedings journal.

- Type of peer review: single-blind; double-blind; triple-blind; open; other (please describe): double-blind
- Conference submission management system: email
- Number of submissions sent for review: 43
- Number of submissions accepted: 19
- Number of submissions published: 19
- Acceptance rate (number of submissions accepted/number of submissions received): 44%
- Average number of reviews per paper: 0.79
- Total number of reviewers involved: 15
- Peer-review process and regulations: The peer-review process consisted of a multi-stage evaluation of the quality, validity, and originality of each paper to ensure the integrity of the study. Editorial review for scope, format, and quality was the first step, and subsequent expert evaluation of methodology and results led to choices like revision, rejection, or acceptance. The editor then selected two experts in the field to evaluate the article. Each manuscript was examined by two experienced professionals in the relevant field. Reviewers assessed the originality, validity, and technical soundness of each manuscript. The handling editor received responses from the reviewers, who suggested either rejection, change (minor/major), or acceptance of the work. Based on the reviewers' feedback, the editor made the final, independent decision and sent it to the authors. The authors made revisions to the paper after receiving comments and suggestions. Final accepted articles were then sent to the journal for proceesing and publication.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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