

## CHARACTERIZATION OF DRAGON FRUIT DECCAN PINK VARIETY DEVELOPED BY A FARMER PRODUCING ORGANIZATION IN TELANGANA, INDIA

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**Abstract:** Dragon fruit is emerging as an excellent crop, even for degraded land owing to its ease of cultivation and several health and medicinal benefits in the Indian sub-continent. Deccan Exotics F.P.O is a farmers' producing organisation started in 2016 for the exclusive cultivation of dragon fruit in Telangana, India. It is making earnest efforts to conserve dragon fruit varieties in the field gene bank and to help farming community in this region. It has developed Deccan Pink clone which has been characterized using standard descriptors. Some of the traits exhibited by the elite clone are Stem characters (young stem reddish colour – Absent or weak; length of segment (131 cm); width (4.7 cm) waxiness (smooth); distance between areoles (5.5 cm); arch height (1.2 cm); margin of rib (concave)], Areola (number of spines-5); Flower bud shape, apex shape, colour, length and width, perianth length are also described. Fruit traits recorded are [length (11.8 cm); width(9.96cm); ratio (3); number of bracts (41.2); length of apical bracts (5.3cm); colour of middle bracts (pink); position of bracts (strongly held out); peel colour (medium pink); colour of flesh (dark pink); fruit weight (526 g). Highest yield recorded from 3-year-old orchard was 12,630 Kg per acre (June-October, 2020). Biochemical traits of fruit are also characterized [carbohydrates (12.3g/100g); TSS (16); antioxidant activity (310.8 µg/100g) phytates (43.13 mg); ascorbic acid (39.5 µg/100g); protein (5.5%). It has got potential to grow in diversified agro-climatic regions of India, thus ensuring food security and increased income to farming community.

**Keywords:** Dragon fruit, *Hylocereus spp.*, Characterization

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