

## **Acknowledgements**

*Though only my name appears on the cover of this thesis, a great many people have contributed to its production. I owe my gratitude to all those people who have made this thesis possible and because of whom my experience has been one that I will cherish forever.*

*I would like to express my deep sense of gratitude to my research guide, Dr. Neeta Pandya, Professor, Department of Botany, Faculty of Science, The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda, for her inspiring guidance, constructive criticism and unstinted cooperation. Her motherly attitude, constant help and encouragement made this work a reality. I will always relish the academic freedom and friendly atmosphere I enjoyed in her laboratory.*

*I sincerely thank Prof. Sandhya Kiran, Head, Prof. Arun Arya, Ex Head, Department of Botany, Faculty of Science, The M.S. University of Baroda, for providing the department facilities throughout this research work. I am extremely thankful to all teaching and nonteaching staff of the department.*

*I am extremely thankful to Dr. Susy Albert, Professor, Department of Botany, Faculty of Science, The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda, for her guidance and constant moral support.*

*I am also grateful to my companion in the project Ms. Dhara Gandhi who was always there with me during the field visits. I will always cherish the beautiful memories we had together.*

*I acknowledge the working plan circle, Vadodara, Forest dept for the fundings.*

*I thank my best friends Dr. Alka Dangash, Dr. Shivangi Purohit and Dr. Bhavna Sharma for their constant motivation and support. I will always cherish their company and friendship.*

*It gives me immense pleasure to extend my thanks to my lab mates Dr. Binal Christian, Dr. Dhaval Vyas, Dr. Nirav Mehta, Shrena Patel, Dr. Divya Patel, Manjit Saini, Nikita Joshi, Dr. Ameer Padhiyar, Dr. Bhavika Pandya, Dr. Rina Koyani, Dr. Gaurav Sanghvi and Dr. Vidya Patil.*

*I would also like to thank my family. They were always by my side, supporting me and encouraging me with their best wishes.*

*Panchal Krishna*

*One of the most marvelous sights of my whole life, unsurpassed in my travels in nearly all parts of the world, was that of the prairie in spring. Unfading are my memories of that waving rippling sea of lavender, when the wild sweet william, a species of phlox two or three feet in height was in full flower. It stretched away in the distance farther than the eye could reach...As the sea of phlox faded it was succeeded by another marvelous flower bed of nature's planting, and this in turn by others until mid-summer was reached...(Herre 1940).*