

Flora in News 2024-2025

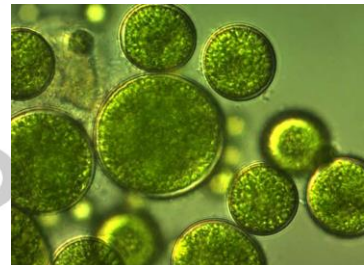
Conocarpus Plant

- **Status:** Banned in Gujarat.
- **Type:** Exotic invasive species, classified as a mangrove.
- **Native Region:** Tropical areas.
- **Uses:** Landscaping due to year-round dark green foliage.
- **Key Characteristics:** Thrives in saline environments; absorbs excessive water, threatening groundwater.
- **Concerns:**
 - Disrupts communication cables and drainage systems with its deep root system.
 - Causes adverse environmental and human health impacts.



Microalgae

- **Type:** Microscopic algae found in freshwater and marine systems.
- **Structure:** Unicellular, existing individually or in chains/groups; lacks roots, stems, or leaves.
- **Categories:** Classified based on color—green, red, or brown.
- **Importance:**
 - Forms the base of the aquatic food chain, serving as a primary food source for filter-feeding organisms.
 - Contributes half of the atmospheric oxygen through photosynthesis.
 - Absorbs CO₂ and can fix nitrogen (e.g., species like *Nostoc*, *Anabaena*, *Oscillatoria*).
 - Rich in nutrients, with edible types like *Spirulina* and *Chlorella*.



Chinars

- **Scientific Name:** *Platanus orientalis* (Oriental Plane).
- **Status:** Official tree of Kashmir.
- **Characteristics:**
 - Deciduous tree growing up to 30 m (98 ft).
 - Displays seasonal color changes, from deep green to blood red, amber, or yellow in autumn.
- **Native Range:** Eurasia (from the Balkans to Central Asia, including Iberia, Israel, and the Himalayas).
- **Cultural Significance:**
 - Brought to Kashmir by Islamic preachers in the 14th century.
 - Associated with Hindu goddess Bhavani by Hindu Kashmiris.
 - Prominent in Mughal gardens and landscapes.



Cuscuta Dodder

- **Type:** Parasitic vine lacking roots (holoparasitic plant).
- **Native Region:** North America.
- **Current Spread:** Invading reserve forests and bird sanctuaries like Vedanthangal in Tamil Nadu.
- **Impact:**
 - Forms dense canopies on host plants, strangling and killing them.
 - Affects oilseeds, pulses, and fodder crops in various Indian states.
- **Global Status:** Declared a noxious weed in 25 countries.



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Roan Olmi

- **Type:** Edible mushroom of the *Termitomyces* species.
- **Habitat:** Termite hills in the Western Ghats (Goa).
- **Role:** Biodegrades 50% of dead plant material into nutrient-rich soil.
- **Unique Trait:** Dependent on termites for survival, making it impossible to cultivate artificially.



Azolla

- **Other Names:** Mosquito fern, duckweed fern, fairy moss, water fern.
- **Type:** Aquatic fern from the *Salviniaceae* family.
- **Key Traits:**
 - Highly productive, capable of doubling biomass in less than two days.
 - Forms a symbiotic relationship with cyanobacterium *Anabaena azollae* for nitrogen fixation.
 - Historically contributed to global cooling during the Eocene era by absorbing massive carbon amounts.
- **Concerns:** Can become invasive in non-native environments.



Jacaranda

- **Scientific Name:** *Jacaranda mimosifolia*.
- **Native Region:** Tropical and subtropical Americas.
- **Characteristics:**
 - Large trees (20–30 m) with blue-violet flowers.
 - Flowers grow in panicles with a five-lobed corolla; some species produce white flowers.
- **Global Cultivation:** Widely planted for its ornamental beauty.



Begonia Narahari

- **Type:** Newly discovered flowering plant.
- **Location:** Arunachal Pradesh.
- **Notable Features:** Distinctive vivid blue iridescence under direct light.



Cycas Circinalis

- **Common Names:** Eenthu Pana (Kerala), Mund Isalu (Kannada), Madana Kama Raja (Tamil).
- **Type:** Member of the endangered Cycadaceae family.
- **Habitat:** Endemic to the Western Ghats; found in hilly, dry, and scrubby woodlands.
- **Characteristics:**

- Perennial palm-like tree, up to 25 feet tall.
- Facultatively deciduous during droughts.
- Takes 40–50 years to bear fruit.
- **Uses:** Valued by indigenous communities for nutritional and medicinal properties.



Orans: The Sacred Groves of Rajasthan

- **Type:** Community-managed sacred forests in Rajasthan.
- **Cultural Importance:** Preserved for centuries with connections to local deities.
- **Biodiversity:**
 - Includes water bodies and supports critically endangered species like the Great Indian Bustard.
- **Concerns:** Potential loss of access and livelihood if declared deemed forests.

Sacred Groves (General)

- **Definition:** Relic forest patches protected in reverence of deities.
- **Distribution:** Found throughout India; known as:
 - Kavu/Sarpa Kavu (Kerala),
 - Devarakadu/Devkad (Karnataka),
 - Deorai/Devrai (Maharashtra),
 - Jahera/Thakuramma (Odisha).
- **Significance:** Critical for conserving biodiversity and providing habitats for endangered species.

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Stipagrostis Sabulicola (Namib Dune Bushman Grass)

- **Type:** Desert grass
- **Habitat:** Endemic to the Namib Desert dunes.
- **Key Features:**
 - Perennial, grows up to 2 meters tall with a shallow root system to absorb water from fog and dew.
 - Specialized leaf structures effectively condense moisture from the air.
- **Ecological Role:**



- Supports a unique desert food web by forming "fog plant oases."
- Relies on fog (39 mm annually) rather than rain (17 mm annually) for moisture.

Tulips

- **Scientific Classification:** Genus *Tulipa*, family Liliaceae.
- **Native Region:** Central Asia and Turkey.
- **Characteristics:**
 - Spring-blooming, perennial, bulbous plants with large, showy flowers in various colors (red, yellow, pink, white, and orange).
 - Often have a distinct colored blotch at the base of the tepals.
- **Cultivation:** Widely grown as ornamental garden plants and for commercial flower production.



Elm Trees

- **Scientific Classification:** Genus *Ulmus*.
- **Native Region:** Temperate and tropical-montane regions of North America and Eurasia.
- **Characteristics:**
 - Deciduous or semi-deciduous, can grow up to 30 m tall.
 - Known for oval-shaped leaves with toothed edges and visible veins.
- **Uses:** Wood used for ship keels, archery bows, furniture, and musical instruments due to its strength and resistance to rot.
- **Conservation Concerns:**
 - Many species affected by Dutch elm disease, a fungal infection spread by bark beetles.

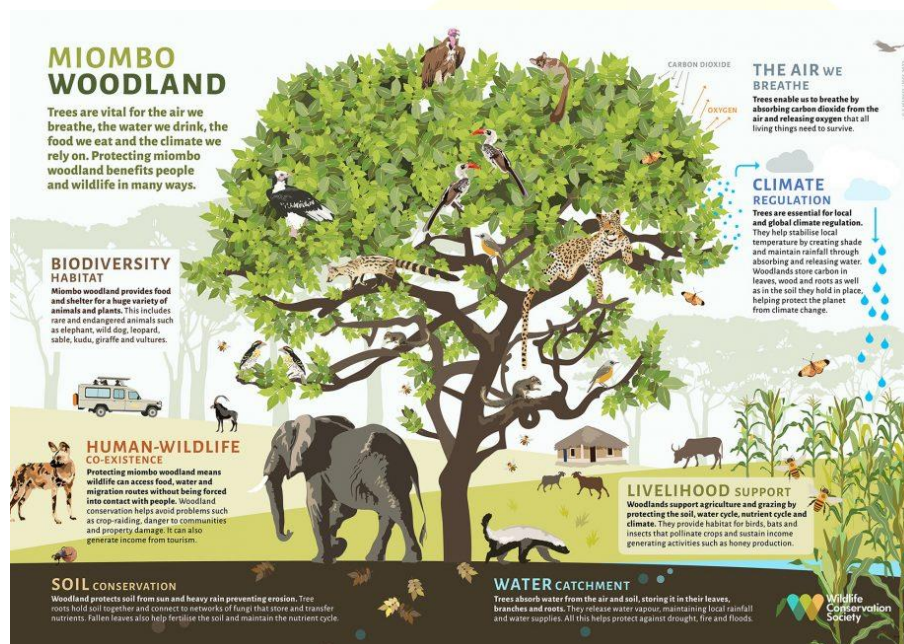


Coca Plant

- **Scientific Name:** *Erythroxylum coca*.
- **Native Region:** Tropical South America.
- **Characteristics:** Shrub-like plant used traditionally in Andean cultures.
- **Significance:** The plant has a controversial role as the source of cocaine, influencing agriculture and socio-economic issues.



Miombo Forest



- **Location:** Spans central and southern tropical Africa, including Angola, Tanzania, and Zimbabwe.
- **Flora:** Dominated by *Brachystegia* and *Julbernardia* tree species.
- **Significance:**
 - Vital resource for millions, providing fuelwood, timber, and food.
 - Supports diverse wildlife, including elephants and endemic birds.
- **Threats:** Deforestation, agricultural expansion, and illegal hunting.

Mettukurinji

- **Scientific Name:** *Strobilanthes sessilis*.
- **Habitat:** Idukki hills, Kerala.
- **Characteristics:**
 - Blooms every seven years, creating stunning violet landscapes.
- **Conservation:** No special protection provided despite its ecological significance.

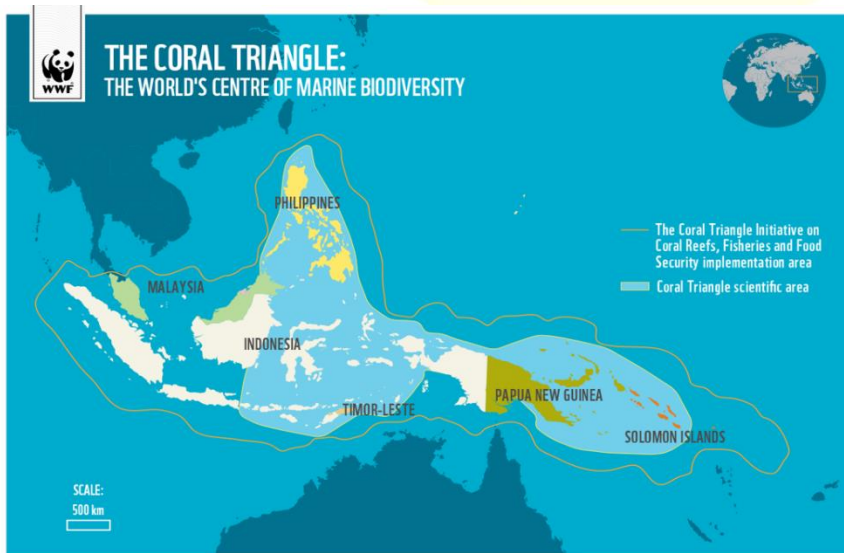


Gongronema sasiharanii

- **Type:** Newly identified plant species.
- **Habitat:** Pampadum Shola National Park, Kerala.
- **Characteristics:**
 - Smooth stems with urn-shaped flowers that are creamy-white to purplish-green.



Coral Triangle



- **Region:** Tropical waters surrounding Indonesia, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, Solomon Islands, and Timor-Leste.
- **Significance:**
 - Known as the "Amazon of the Seas" for its unparalleled marine biodiversity.
 - Contains over 76% of the world's shallow-water reef-building coral species and 37% of reef fish species.

- **Economic Importance:**
 - Contributes \$1.2 trillion annually to the marine ecosystem's GDP.
 - Supports over 120 million people.
- **Threats:** Overfishing, habitat destruction, pollution, and climate change.

Mikania Micrantha

- **Type:** Perennial creeping climber, invasive weed.
- **Native Region:** Central and South America.
- **Impact:**
 - Introduced to India in the 1940s; now affects tea plantations and forest areas.
 - Smothers native plants and inhibits seed germination through allelopathy.



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