

IUCN SSC Western Ghats Plant Specialist Group



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NUMBER OF MEMBERS
59

SOCIAL MEDIA AND WEBSITE
Facebook: The Western Ghats Plant Specialist Group
Instagram: @iucn_wgpsg

Mission statement

The mission of the Western Ghats Plant Specialist Group (WGPSG) is to improve current knowledge on taxonomy and ecology of plants of the entire region of the Western Ghats and thereby enhance their conservation status in the long term.

Projected impact 2021–2025

Our mission is to improve the conservation status of wild plants in the Western Ghats. There are several experts working on plant conservation in this region and the WGPSG gives us a common platform. Population-level assessments of the Critically Endangered and endemic flora are urgently needed to assess threats. We will collate regional assessments of threats to plants and bring that information into the Red List database. This will help raise awareness about the major threats to plants in this region, to prioritise and recommend conservation actions and to implement species recovery programmes.

Targets 2021–2025

ASSESS

T-001 Facilitate extinction risk assessments following the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species methodology for several key genera and species of Western Ghats and publish the finalised assessments on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™.

T-002 Facilitate assessments following the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species methodology for selected genera and species with high diversity in Western Ghats (e.g. *Ceropegia*, *Impatiens*) and publish the finalised assessments on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™.

T-011 Assess threats to habitats in collaboration with local research NGOs, especially to estimate the status of invasive species.

T-012 Identify Key Biodiversity Areas for Plants in collaboration with Forest departments, local NGOs, citizen groups and others. Support declaration of Important Plant Conservation Areas.

ACT

T-004 Undertake ex situ and in situ conservation efforts in collaboration with scientifically managed nurseries, arboretums and botanical gardens.

T-008 Undertake documentation of sustainable use practices for species, plants and livelihood linkages (wild plants in use for self and market).

NETWORK

T-010 Conduct regular field courses in plant taxonomy and conservation science for graduate level students. Conduct regular courses for citizens and professionals in related fields for biodiversity conservation action.

COMMUNICATE

T-003 Advocate for more plant conservation work across the region among educational institutions, local/regional governments and corporate bodies.

T-013 Maintain an email distribution list for workshops planned/held. Maintain a Whatsapp group and social media presence with focus on local language campaigns.

Activities and results 2021

ASSESS

Red List

T-001 (KSR 6)

Number of global Red List reassessments completed: 18

Result description: Eighteen assessments are finalised and submitted/published.



Rhododendron arboreum ssp. *nilagiricum*
 endemic to Western Ghats
 Photo: Aditya Gadkari

T-002 (KSR 6)

Number of global Red List reassessments completed: 18

Result description: Eighteen assessments are finalised and submitted.

Research activities

T-011 (KSR 6)

Number of new invasive species accounts on the Global Invasive Species Database (GISD): ongoing

Result description: Dr Aparna Watve and Dr Ankur Patwardhan provided scientific support to the NGO Research and Action in Natural Wealth Administration (RANWA), for understanding the impact of invasive species (especially *Chromolaena odorata*) in the Mahabaleshwar Panchgani Ecologically Sensitive Area in June–December 2021. Citizen mapping of invasive species of the Nilgiris district was undertaken to create an Atlas of invasives of the region. Dr Aparna undertook field visits to assess threats to localised *Myristica* swamps of the Konkan region.

T-012 (KSR 6)

Number of new Key Biodiversity Areas confirmed in the World Database of KBAs (WDKBA): ongoing

Result description: *Myristica* Swamp forests are one of the most endangered of ecosystems in the Western Ghats. A patch of this has been conserved in Maharashtra state which protects populations of endangered Myristicaceae.

ACT

Technical advice

T-004 (KSR 10)

Number of technical consultations provided to support conservation actions: 1

Result description: Discussions on management of nurseries for endemic trees were conducted between members and planning of species cycle was made. A cycle of work from assess-plan to act was discussed.

T-008 (KSR 11)

Number of sustainable use practices supported: ongoing

Result description: Wild edible species of the region (440) were compiled from the literature. Dr Suchandra Dutta, a member of WGPSG, has been consistently raising awareness about edible plants from wild and home gardens, collecting primary data and encouraging local knowledgeable individuals to document associated traditional knowledge of wild edible plants (see for example: <https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?vanity=suchandra.dutta.56&set=a.10160853208102542>).

NETWORK

Capacity building

T-010 (KSR 2)

Number of people trained in assessment tools: 20

Result description: Students were trained in assessments and conservation planning for endemic species.

COMMUNICATE

Communication

T-003 (KSR 13)

Number of communication products using innovative tools: 1

Result description: One of the member institutions, Naorji Godrej Centre for Plant Research (NGCPR), has completed an online digital herbarium of endemic plants of the Western Ghats. Agharkar Research Institute has made short films on rare species and important habitats.

T-013 (KSR 13)

Number of digital communication outputs developed in relation to specific taxonomic groups: 1

Result description: The IUCN SSC WGPSG page regularly posts endemic species and information of relevance to conservation.

Acknowledgements

We gratefully acknowledge the grant from Franklina Foundation for ‘Strengthening conservation action for selected endangered native tree species of the Western Ghats, India’ in 2021. We gratefully acknowledge the grant from Re:wild for the project ‘Assessment of evolutionarily distinct species of the Western Ghats for preparing conservation management plans’, work to be carried out in collaboration with the IUCN SSC Freshwater Plants Specialist Group (start of grant January 2022).

Summary of achievements

Total number of targets 2021–2025: 9

Geographic regions: 9 Asia

Actions during 2021:

Assess: 4 (KSR 6)

Act: 2 (KSR 10, 11)

Network: 1 (KSR 2)

Communicate: 2 (KSR 13)

Overall achievement 2021–2025:

