



Blood-oozing Tree

A trio of researchers led by **Assam** forest officer Jatindra Sarma has discovered **Dracaena cambodiana**, a dragon tree species in the Dongka Sarpo area of West Karbi Anglong. This is for the first time that a dragon tree species has been reported from India.

Properties

- It is a plant that **yields dragon's blood** — a bright red resin (a precious traditional medicine in China) used since ancient times as medicine, body oil, varnish, incense and dye.
- Several **antifungal and antibacterial compounds**, antioxidants, flavonoids, etc. have been extracted from various parts of the plant.

Location

- In India, the Dracaena genus belonging to the **family Asparagaceae** is represented by **nine species** and two varieties in the Himalayan region, the northeast and Andaman and Nicobar Islands. But Dracaena cambodiana is the **only true dragon tree species**, the study said.

Threat

- Recent **overexploitation** to meet the increasing demand for dragon's blood has resulted in rapid depletion of the plant. For this reason, the species is already listed in the inventory of **Rare and Endangered Plants of China**.
- The population size of the dragon tree species in Assam was estimated to be **fewer than 50 mature individuals**. The habitat of the plant is severely fragmented due to **open excavation of a stone quarry** and there is continuing decrease in its area of occupancy and number of mature individuals.
- The **Dracaena seeds are usually dispersed by birds**. But due to the large fruit size, only a few species of birds are able to swallow the fruits, thus limiting the scope of its natural conservation.

[Source: The Hindu](#)

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