



# Pyrostria laljii: New Species from Andaman

## Why in News

Recently, *Pyrostria laljii*, a new species which belongs to the genus of the coffee family has recently been discovered from the Andaman Islands.

- A new species of pokeweed named *Rivina andamanensis* was also discovered.
- [Andaman and Nicobar](#) is a group of 572 islands and islets that are rich and unique in terms of plant diversity in India.

## Key Points

- About:



- It is the **first record of the genus Pyrostria** in India. It is a **15-meter-tall tree**.
  - Plants belonging to genus Pyrostria are **usually found in Madagascar** but the

recently discovered species is new to science.

- While the genus **Pyrostria** is not found in India, there are several **genera from the family Rubiaceae that are common in India.**
  - These plants, including **cinchona, coffee, adina, hamelia, ixora, gallium, gardenia, mussaenda, rubia, morinda,** have high potential for economic value.
  - **Named Pyrostria laljii after Lal Ji Singh,** Joint Director, Andaman and Nicobar Regional Centre, **Botanical Survey of India.**
  - It has been **assessed as 'Critically Endangered'** based on the [International Union for Conservation of Nature's \(IUCN\) Red List](#) criteria.
- **Features:**
- Distinguished by a **long stem with a whitish coating on the trunk,** and **oblong-ovate leaves with a cuneate base.**
  - Another physical feature that distinguishes the tree from other species of the genus is its **umbellate inflorescence with eight to 12 flowers.**
- **Habitat in India:**
- First reported from **South Andaman's Wandoor forest.** Other places in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands where the tree could be located are the **Tirur forest near the Jarawa Reserve Forest** and the **Chidiya Tapu (Munda Pahar) forest.**

## Rivina andamanensis

- Another **new species of pokeweed** named **Rivina andamanensis** was also discovered. It was **found growing under large trees, shaded and rocky areas,** along with herbs and shrubby plants.
- **Pokeweed** is a **strong-smelling plant with a poisonous root.** The berries contain a red dye used to colour wine, candies, cloth, and paper.



- This discovery of new species, representing the **first record of the pokeweed family Petiveriaceae in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands,** adds one more family to the islands' flora.

## Botanical Survey of India

- **About:**
  - It is the **apex research organization** under the **Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEFCC)** for carrying out **taxonomic and floristic studies on wild plant resources** of the country.
  - It was **established in 1890** with the objective to **explore plant resources of the country and to identify plant species with economic virtues.**

- It has **nine regional circles** situated at different regions of the country. However the **headquarter is located in Kolkata, West Bengal.**

▪ **Functions:**

- **Exploration, inventorying and documentation** of phytodiversity in general and protected areas, hotspots and fragile ecosystems in particular
- **Publication** of National, State and District Floras.
- **Identification** of threatened and red list species and species rich areas needing conservation.
- **Ex-situ conservation** of critically threatened species in botanical gardens.
- **Survey and documentation** of traditional knowledge (ethno-botany) associated with plants.
- **Develop National database** of Indian plants, including herbarium and live specimens, botanical paintings and illustrations, etc.

[Source: TH](#)

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