



## Arogyapacha: 'Miracle Plant'

Scientists from the University of Kerala have decoded the genetic make-up of **Arogyapacha (Trichopus zeylanicus)**, a highly potent medicinal plant endemic to the **Agasthya hills**.

- This 'miracle plant' is known for its traditional use by the **Kani tribal community** to combat fatigue.
- Studies have also proved its varied spectrum of pharmacological properties such as antioxidant, aphrodisiac, anti-microbial, anti-inflammatory, immunomodulatory, anti-tumour, anti-ulcer, anti-hyperlipidemic, hepatoprotective and anti-diabetic.
- The project is bound to open up a new window to the plant's molecular secrets, the genome and annotation data will be a valuable resource to expedite research on Arogyapacha, particularly its secondary metabolism, genetic breeding, and comparative studies.

### Kani Tribe

- Traditionally Kani tribes are a nomadic people. They are indigenous to tropical forests of the Agasthyamalai hills of the Western Ghats, a mountain range in Kerala. They have a population of almost 25,000.
- Kani has a rich tradition of using wild plants found in the region for health reasons. The tribal physicians, **known as Plathi** – are the exclusive holders of the traditional medicinal knowledge of the tribe.
  - According to Kani tribal customs, only the **Plathi** have the right to transfer and disseminate their traditional medicinal knowledge.

### Agasthya hills

- **Agasthya** hill is a 1,868-metre (6,129 ft) tall peak within Neyyar Wildlife Sanctuary, in the Western Ghats of Kerala. The peak lies on the border of Kerala and Tamil Nadu. This peak is a part of the **Agasthyamala Biosphere Reserve** which lies on the border between the states of Kerala and Tamil Nadu.
- The peak is named after Hindu sage **Agastya**, who is considered to be one of the seven rishis (Saptarishi) of Hindu Puranas. It is a pilgrimage centre for devotees.
- The **Thamirabarani River** is a perennial river which originates from the eastern side of the range and flows into the Tirunelveli district of Tamil Nadu.
- In Tamil traditions, **Agastya** is considered as the father of the Tamil language and the compiler of the **first Tamil grammar called Agattiyam**. The Malayalam language is considered to be born from Agasthya.
- Agasthyamala Biosphere Reserve is among 20 new sites added by UNESCO to its World Network of Biosphere Reserves in March 2016.

