



Rhododendron

Why in News?

Recently, the [Botanical Survey of India](#) has published a new report titled '**Rhododendrons of Sikkim and Darjeeling Himalaya- An Illustrated Account**', which lists **45 taxa of rhododendrons**.



What is Rhododendron?

- Rhododendron is a **genus of flowering plants** that includes about **1,000 species**, primarily native to the **temperate regions of Asia, North America, and Europe**, as well as to the tropical regions of southeast Asia and northern Australia.
- They are known for their **showy clusters of large, brightly coloured flowers**, and many **species** are popular ornamental plants in gardens and parks.
- Rhododendrons are **evergreen or deciduous shrubs or small trees, with woody stems and broad, leathery leaves**.
- In India, **Pink Rhododendron** is the state flower of Himachal Pradesh, while Rhododendron arboreum is the **state flower of Nagaland** and the official **State Tree of Uttarakhand**.

What are the Major Highlights of the Report?

- The report reveals that the [Darjeeling and Sikkim Himalayas](#) are home to more than one-third (**34%**) of all **rhododendron types found in India**, despite the region comprising only **0.3% of India's geographical area**.
- There are **132 taxa (80 species, 25 subspecies and 27 varieties)** of rhododendrons found in India.
- Of the 45 taxa listed in the report, **five are facing high threats due to anthropological pressures and climate change**.
 - **Rhododendron edgeworthii, Rhododendron niveum, Rhododendron baileyi, Rhododendron lindleyi, and Rhododendron maddenii** are among the threatened species.

- Rhododendron is considered an **indicator species for climate change** as the flowering season for rhododendrons has been found to begin as early as **January for some species**.

Source: TH

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