

# Allium negianum

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**In news**-Recently, a plant discovered in Uttarakhand in 2019 has been newly confirmed as a new species of Allium genus similar to onion and garlic.

## About Allium negianum

- Allium genus **includes many staple foods such as onion and garlic, among 1,100 species worldwide.**
- In 2019, Dr Anjula Pandey, Principal Scientist at ICAR-National Bureau of Plant Genetic Resources in New Delhi, together with other scientists came across plants of this onion species, which they have named Allium negianum
- **It grows in Malari region of Niti valley in Chamoli district and Dharma valley** of Pithoragarh district, Uttarakhand, India.
- **It grows at 3,000 to 4,800 m above sea level and can be found along open grassy meadows, sandy soils along rivers, and streams** forming in snow pasture lands along alpine meadows, where the melting snow helps carry its seeds to more favourable areas.
- The new species is described in the journal PhytoKeys.
- The scientific name Allium negianum honours the late Dr Kuldeep Singh Negi, an explorer and Allium collector.
- Although new to science, this species has long been **known under domestic cultivation to local communities.**
- According to locals, the onion from Niti valley was particularly good, even deemed the best on the market.
- Allium is one of the largest genera in

Amaryllidaceae, a family of herbaceous, mainly perennial and bulbous flowering plants.

- The genus has about 1,100 species distributed worldwide, including onion, garlic, scallion, shallot and chives.
- The primary center of evolution for the genus extends across the Irano-Turanian bio-geographical region, and the Mediterranean basin and western North America are considered as the secondary centers of diversity.
- The Indian Himalayan region has two distinct centers of Allium diversity, the western Himalaya (over 85% of total diversity) and the eastern Himalaya (6%), covering the alpine-sub temperate region.
- **The newly-identified species, named Allium negianum, is restricted to the region of the western Himalaya.**

## Threats

- So far only known from the western Himalaya region, Allium negianum might be under pressure from people looking to taste it.
- The researchers fear **that indiscriminate harvest of its leaves and bulbs for seasoning** may pose a threat to its wild populations.