

Argostemma quarantena

June 12, 2021

In news- A new plant species belonging to the coffee family is spotted in the **Vagamon hills in Kerala.**

More information-

- It is a delicate **herbaceous species from the family Rubiaceae.**
- It has been named Argostemma quarantena to **commemorate the millions who have died in the COVID-19 pandemic.**
- It is a **perennial herb** which grows to a height of 3-7cm and is characterised by striking **white flowers.**
- It is very sensitive to microclimatic changes and is **found in wet rocks in shaded, undisturbed habitats, notably along streams in evergreen forests.**
- The new species sports **similarities with two south Indian endemics, Argostemma anupama and Argostemma courtallense.**
- However, it **differs in attributes** like the stem, leaves and stipules.
- As it is known only from its type locality at Vagamon, the species has been classified **Data Deficient (DD) under IUCN standards** as extensive field surveys are required to assign an appropriate category.

It is the fifth species discovered from Vagamon by research teams and the others include- **Eriocaulon meenachilense**, a new tuberous species and **Litsea manilaliana**, named after botanist K.S. Manilal.