

# Madhuca Diplostemon

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## In News

- Madhuca diplostemon tree has been rediscovered after a gap of more than 180 years from a sacred grove in Kollam district, Kerala.

## Madhuca diplostemon

- The tree is locally known as Kavilippa in Malayalam.
- Scientists have identified the tree as Madhuca diplostemon (family Sapotaceae), a threatened species of the Western Ghats whose specimen was first collected in 1835.
- Only one mature tree has been found so far, which makes this remarkable rediscovery extremely valuable from a scientific, environmental and conservation point of view.
- It has been identified by the scientists at the Jawaharlal Nehru Tropical Botanic Garden and Research Institute (JNTBGRI) at Palode, Kerala.
- The threatened species of the Western Ghats was believed to be extinct.
- This is the second time a tree of this species has ever been located and only one mature tree has been found so far, which makes this remarkable rediscovery extremely valuable from a scientific, environmental and conservation point of view.
  - In 1835, Robert Wight, a surgeon-botanist with the East India Company, found the first specimen.
- Since the species is represented only by one specimen in a single locality, it is eligible to be categorised 'Critically Endangered' by the IUCN.

**SCSTE-Jawaharlal Nehru Tropical Botanic Garden and Research Institute (KSCSTE – JNTBGRI)**

- Founded in 1979 with the objective of establishing a Conservatory Botanic Garden of tropical plant resources in general and of the country and the Kerala state in particular.
- It also undertakes research programmes for the sustainable utilization of the resources.
- The idea of establishing the institute was conceived soon after the first United Nations Conference on human Environment, held in Stockholm in 1972 by the Founder Director, the late Professor A. Abraham and its commitment to conserve the waning tropical plant species of India.
- Consequently, the institute was established as an autonomous R & D organization by the Government of Kerala in 1979.
- In 1996 Saraswathy Thangavelu Extension Centre of KSCSTE – JNTBGRI housing the Bioinformatics component became functioning. During the year 2003, JNTBGRI was bought under the newly formed society, Kerala State Council for Science, Technology and Environment (KSCSTE).
- KSCSTE – JNTBGRI is the only organization in India, which maintains a 300 acre conservatory garden for the wild tropical plant genetic resources of the country.