

Neelakurinji

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In news- Neelakurinji flowers have bloomed in Kodagu district of Karnataka after 12 years. The kind of mass flowering is known as **gregarious flowering**.

About the flower-

- It is a shrub that is found in the **shola forests of the Western Ghats in Kerala, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu**.
- Locally known as Kurinji, the flowers grow at an altitude of 1,300 to 2,400 metres.
- **Nilgiri Hills, which literally means the blue mountains**, got their name from the purplish blue flowers of Neelakurinji that bloom only once in 12 years.
- **Kurinjimala Sanctuary of Kerala** protects the kurinji in approximately 32 km² core habitat in Kottakamboor and Vattavada villages in Idukki district.
- **Kurinji Andavar temple located in Kodaikanal of Tamil Nadu** dedicated to Tamil God Murugan also preserves these plants.
- The **Paliyan tribal people** living in Tamil Nadu used it as a **reference to calculate their age**.
- Karnataka has around 45 species of Neelakurinji and each species blooms at intervals of six, nine, 11 or 12 years.
- Besides the Western Ghats, Neelakurinji is **also seen in the Shevroy in the Eastern Ghats, Sanduru hills of Bellary district in Karnataka**.