

Orchids in India

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Why in news?

Botanical Survey of India (BSI) came up with the **first comprehensive census of orchids of India** putting the total number of orchid species or taxa to 1,256

About it:

- Orchids can be **broadly categorized into three life forms:**
- **Epiphytic** (plants growing on another plants, on rock boulders),
- **Terrestrial** (plants growing on land and climbers),
- **Mycoheterotrophy** (plants which derive nutrients from mycorrhizal fungi that are attached to the roots of a vascular plant).
- About 60% of all orchids found in the country, which is 757 species, are epiphytic, 447 are terrestrial and 43 are mycoheterotrophy.
- Among the 10 biogeographic zones of India, the **Himalayan zone is the richest in terms of orchid species followed by Northeast, Western Ghats, Deccan plateau and Andaman & Nicobar Islands.**
- While North-east India ranks at the top in species concentration, the Western Ghats have high endemism of orchids (one- third of the species).
- The **highest number** of orchid species is recorded from **Arunachal Pradesh followed by Sikkim and West Bengal.**
- The entire orchid family is listed under **Appendix II of CITES** and hence any trade of wild orchid is banned globally.