

State of the World's Trees Report

September 4, 2021

In news– Botanic Gardens Conservation International (BGCI) has released the State of the World's Trees report recently.

About State of the World's Trees report

- As per the report, **17,500 tree species out of 60,000 (around 30%) known tree species face extinction.**
- It says Some **142 species have already vanished from the wild**, while 442 are on the very edge of extinction, with fewer than 50 individual trees remaining.
- The report says that the **number of threatened tree species is double the number of threatened mammals, birds**, amphibians and reptiles combined.
- **Most risk trees:** Among the most at-risk trees are species including magnolias and dipterocarps, which are commonly found in Southeast Asian rainforests.
- Oak trees, maple trees and ebonies also face threats.
- **Top 6 countries with highest risk:**
 - It revealed that thousands of varieties of trees in the world's top six countries for tree-species diversity are at risk of extinction.
 - The greatest single number is in Brazil, where 1,788 species are at risk.
 - The other five countries are Indonesia, Malaysia, China, Colombia and Venezuela.

- Climate change and extreme weather are emerging threats.
 - At least 180 tree species are directly threatened by rising seas and severe weather, especially island species such as magnolias in the Caribbean.
 - Though megadiverse countries see the greatest numbers of varieties at risk of extinction, **island tree species are more proportionally at risk.**
- **The biggest threats to trees globally are:**
 - Forest clearance for crops (impacting 29% of species).
 - Timber logging (27%).
 - Clearance for livestock grazing or farming (14%).
 - Clearance for development (13%).
 - Fire (13%).
 - Energy production & mining(9%).
 - Wood & pulp plantation(6%).
 - Invasive & other problematic species(5%).
 - Climate change(4%).

Trees at particular risk of extinction include:

- Large tropical trees known as dipterocarps that are being lost due to the expansion of palm oil plantations
- Oak trees lost to farming and development in parts of Mexico, Chile and Argentina
- Ebony and rosewood trees being felled for timber in Madagascar
- Magnolia trees at threat from unsustainable plant collecting
- Trees such as ash that are dying from pests and diseases in the UK and North America

Actions suggested-

The experts are calling for a number of actions, including:

- Preserving existing forests and expanding protected areas (currently at least 64% of all tree species can be found in at least one protected area)
- Keeping threatened species in botanic gardens or seed banks in the hope they can one day be returned to the wild (currently about 30% of all trees are backed up in this way)
- Providing education to ensure reforestation and tree planting schemes are carried out scientifically, with the right tree in the right place, including rare and threatened species
- Increasing funding for tree conservation.

Botanic Gardens Conservation International (BGCI)

- BGCI is a membership organisation, representing botanic gardens in more than 100 countries around the world.
- It is an independent UK charity established in 1987 to link the botanic gardens of the world in a global network for plant conservation.
- Its vision is a world in which plant diversity is valued, secure and supporting all life.