

Three new species of wild balsam identified in Kerala

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In news- Researchers have identified three new species of wild balsam in Kerala.

More information-

- The species, belonging to the **genus *Impatiens* (family Balsaminaceae)**, were spotted in the Western Ghats region of southern Kerala and the Idukki district.
- Plants of this genus are popular as **'Kasithumba'** or **'Sheema Thumba'** in Malayalam.
- A plant with whitish-creamy flowers found in the Kallar forest, Thiruvananthapuram district, has been **named *Impatiens achudanandanii* after former Chief Minister V.S. Achuthanandan.**
- Found at an altitude of 1200 metres, it is a straggling, glabrous herb that faces threats from wild elephants and landslides.
- A discovery from the Sankhili forest in south Kerala, is **named *Impatiens shailajae*, honouring former health minister K.K. Shailaja.**
- It is a 10-20 cm tall plant with a white flower which sports a yellow blotch on the throat.
- ***Impatiens danii***, spotted in Munnar, Idukki, is **named after Mathew Dan, scientist and head, Plant Genetic Resource Division, Jawaharlal Nehru Tropical Botanic Garden and Research Institute (JNTBGRI), Thiruvananthapuram.**
- Due to their tiny populations, all three species **can be**

classified as Critically Endangered (CE), applying the IUCN criteria.

- The genus *Impatiens* is represented by more than 210 taxa in India and over 106 species are endemic to the Western Ghats, of which 80% are endangered.