

Neelakurinji Bloom at Meeshapulimala

Prelims: Current events of national and international importance | Species

Why in News?

Neelakurinji has bloomed at Meeshapulimala in Munnar, Kerala. The site was opened to tourists on October 26, 2026.

- This flowering event is considered unusual, as Neelakurinji typically does not bloom at elevations exceeding 2,500 metres.
- The Kerala Forest Development Corporation (KFDC), in collaboration with the Wildlife Trust of India (WTI), has launched the Kurinji mobile application to facilitate online bookings.
- Daily tourist entry is limited to 750 visitors in order to protect the ecologically sensitive landscape.

Neelakurinji Bloom at Meeshapulimala		
Topic	Fact	
 Neelakurinji	<i>Strobilanthes kunthiana</i>	
 Family	Acanthaceae	
 Flowering	Mass flowering; popularly associated with a 12-year cycle	
 Meeshapulimala	Munnar, Kerala	
 Mountain range	Western Ghats	
 Associated animal	Nilgiri tahr	
 Nilgiri tahr conservation status	Endangered (IUCN)	
 Tourism authority	Kerala Forest Development Corporation	
 Conservation partner	Wildlife Trust of India	
 Daily visitor cap	750	

Meeshapulimala
Munnar, Kerala



Neelakurinji
Strobilanthes kunthiana



Nilgiri tahr
Endangered (IUCN)

Neelakurinji

- **Scientific name** - *Strobilanthes kunthiana*
- **Type** - Flowering plant/shrub.

- **Family** - Acanthaceae.
- **Habitat** - Shola-grassland landscapes and montane regions of the Western Ghats.
- **Distribution**: Associated with the high-altitude hills of southern India, particularly the Nilgiri and adjoining mountain ranges.
- **Flower colour**: Bluish-purple.
- **Special feature**: Mass flowering transforms hillsides into carpets of blue-purple flowers.

Flowering Pattern

- Neelakurinji is renowned for its **gregarious flowering**, during which a large number of plants bloom simultaneously.
- Neelakurinji is commonly associated with a **12-year flowering cycle**; however, flowering intervals may vary among different *Strobilanthes* species.
- In Munnar, the flowering progressed from lower elevations to higher elevations.
- The Meeshapulimala bloom is projected to continue until December 2026.
- The next Neelakurinji flowering season at Eravikulam National Park is anticipated in 2030.

Meeshapulimala: Geographic Location and Ecological Importance

- **Located in** - Kerala.
- **Situated in** - Munnar region of Idukki district within the Western Ghats.
- **Ecological significance** - A high-altitude mountain habitat that supports specialised flora and fauna.
- **Wildlife** - It includes the Nilgiri tahr, an endangered mountain ungulate endemic to the southern Western Ghats.
- The area falls under the jurisdiction of the **Kerala Forest Development Corporation (KFDC)**.

Significance of the Neelakurinji Bloom

- Neelakurinji typically does not bloom at elevations above 2,500 metres.
- The KFDC property, Rhodo Mansion, is situated at approximately 2,470 metres, where flowering has been observed on the surrounding slopes.
- Concerns were raised regarding delayed flowering attributed to **El Niño effects and fluctuations in the monsoon**.
- Subsequently, flowering was also observed on the **Meeshapulimala hills**.
- The report emphasises the unusual elevation and timing of the bloom but does not identify a definitive scientific cause for the observed flowering pattern.

Reference

[The Hindu | Neelakurinji Bloom at Meeshapulimala](#)



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