New Green Cardamom Species

Why in News?

Recently, an international team of researchers have identified 2 new species that are close cousins to green cardamom.

- **Green cardamom** – It is the *most valuable spice plant in the world* and of huge economic importance.
- **Taxonomy**
  - **Scientific name** – Elettaria cardamomum.
  - **Genus** – Elettaria, now ***has 7 species***.
- It is based on the spice's *old Malayalam name, Elletari* which is used by Hendrik van Rheede in the 17th century.
- **Seed capsules** – It provides the commercial green cardamom.
- It is known as ***Queen of Spices***.
- **2 new species** – Elettaria facifera and Elettaria tulipifera.
- **Discovered in** – Western Ghats regions of Kerala.

Elettaria Facifera

- **Found in** – Kerala's ***Periyar Tiger Reserve*** in Idukki district.
- **Morphology** – It is distinguished by sessile leaves, erect flowering shoots that are separate from the leafy shoots, and pure white labellum with purple-red markings.
- **Mannan tribe** – They refer to it as the ***Vai noki elam***, (loosely, Open-mouth cardamom) due to the fruit's resemblance to an open mouth.

Elettaria Tulipifera

- **Found in** – ***Agasthyamalai hills*** in Thiruvananthapuram district.
- **Morphology** – It has strikingly beautiful tulip-shaped inflorescence and large, bright to dark red, whorled bracts.



- **Conservation** – The researchers have underlined the need for conservation efforts as both species face threats.

Reference

The Hindu| 2 New Green Cardamom Species

