Ruellia elegans

Why in News?

A new study has flagged the threat to native biodiversity because Ruellia elegans, an invasive plant from Brazil, recorded for the first time in Assam's oil town Digboi.

- It is a flowering plant native to ***Latin America***, invasive to India.
- It is commonly known as the Brazilian petunia, Christmas pride, elegant Ruellia, red Ruellia, and wild petunia.
- It derives its name from its *pleasing appearance or elegance*.
- **Appearance** – It appears with *bright red trumpet shaped flowers* that appear on 6 to 8 inch wand-like stems.
- The upper petals tend to flare out and back, while the lower one curls out and downward.
- It forms a 12 inch high by 24 inch in diameter mound of soft green, semi-fuzzy foliage.
- **Habitat** - Predominantly thriving in wet tropical biome.
- The plant tolerates a light frost, but dies back at about 28 degrees.
- **Life Cycle –** Annual.
- **Soil Texture** - High Organic Matter, Loam (Silt).



- **Conservation status -** Not assessed.
- **Threats** - Bacterial leaf spots, fungal leaf spots, rust, root rot.
- The Brazilian flowering plant was introduced in the Andaman Islands, apart from Jamaica and Puerto Rico.
- It is one of 4 invasive species of the Acanthoideae sub-family in India, the others being Ruellia ciliatiflora, Ruellia simplex, and Ruellia tuberosa.

India has 6 native species of Ruellia namely, beddomei, ciliata, malabarica, patula, sibua, and sivarajanii.

References

1. The Hindu | Ruellia elegans
2. NCSU Edu | Ruellia elegans

