

Strobilanthes riteshii

Prelims: Current events of national and international importance | Conservation

Why in News?

Recently, researchers from the Botanical Survey of India formally recorded a new flowering plant species from Arunachal Pradesh.

- **Family** - Acanthaceae.
- **Genus** - Strobilanthes.
 - India hosts a rich diversity of Strobilanthes, with the Himalayan and Northeast region contributing nearly half of the total.
 - They are known for their striking flowers and mass-flowering cycles.
- **Nomenclature** - Named it after Dr Ritesh Kumar Choudhary, an Indian plant taxonomist at the Agharkar Research Institute.
- In honour of his contributions to plant taxonomy and molecular systematics.
- **Discovery** - Chayangtajo in East Kameng district of Arunachal Pradesh.
- **Habitat** - Grows along roadsides on open hill slopes, often near **small waterfalls and streams** within evergreen forest patches.
- **Distribution** - Endemic to the Eastern Himalayan region of Arunachal Pradesh, with only about 25 mature individuals recorded so far.
- **Key Characteristics** -
 - **Appearance** - It is a rare flowering shrub/herb with a close resemblance to **Strobilanthes gigantea**.
 - **Flowers** - The flowers are purple to violet, bell-shaped and possess flaring petals.
 - **Flowering Season** - Observed between August and October, while fruiting occurs from September to December.
- **Conservation Status** -
 - **IUCN Red List** - Data Deficient (DD)
- **Threats** - Habitat pressure from road-widening, shifting (jhum)

cultivation, and stream pollution.

- Limited data on wider distribution increases conservation risk.
- **Ecological Significance** - Shows the Eastern Himalaya as a key ***biogeographical corridor linking India, China and Tibet.***
- Highlights the unique, highly endemic Himalayan flora.
- Emphasises the need for continued exploration and conservation of fragile ecosystems.



References

1. [India Today NE | Strobilanthes riteshii](#)
2. [NE Now | Strobilanthes riteshii](#)