

Flora of the Week

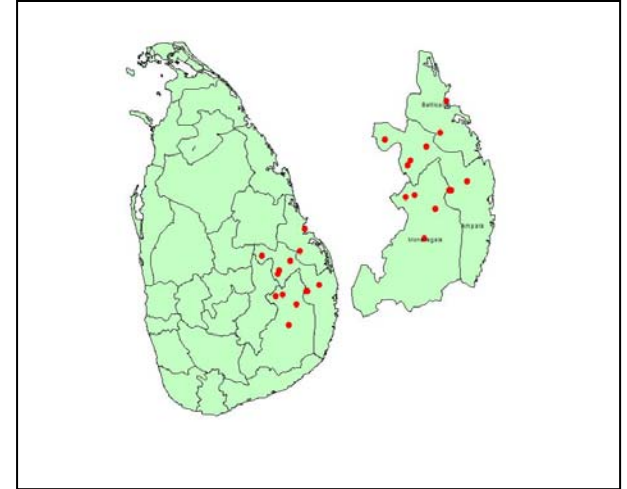


Classification

Kingdom : Plantae
Order : Asparagales
Family : Orchidaceae
Genus : *Rhynchosstylis*
Species: : *Rhynchosstylis retusa* Blume

Common Name (English): fox tail orchid

Common Name (Sinhala) : “Gurulu raja”



Source: *Redlist 2007*

Special features

Flower of This plant is named as the provincial flower of the Uwa Province. The plant can be easily identified by its attractive inflorescences.

Distribution

The plant is indigenous to Sri Lanka and can be found in Eastern and Uwa provinces on large trees of dry zone low country savannahs. It is also found in countries like India, Java, Malaysia and Myanmar. This is the only plant belongs to genus *Rhynchosstylis* in Sri Lanka.

Description

It is an epiphytic orchid. Stem is woody and up to 25 cm in height. Stem is obscured by crowded leaf bases. Leaves are long, about 15 – 37cm spreading to either side of the stem alternatively, curving downwards. Inflorescence is a compact drooping raceme. Flowers small up to 2 cm broad numerous, white spotted with violet pink tightly packed all round and obscuring the pendulous 20 -30 cm long stalk. Flowers can be seen from November to April.

Threatened status

Vulnerable VU.

Users

Plant is grown in gardens due to the attractive nature of the inflorescence. The plant also collected for medicinal value.

Conservation Status

This plant is protected under Fauna and Flora Protected Ordinance and CITES Convention Appendix II.

References:

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