

Living Gymnosperms in Tamilnadu State (India)

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ABSTRACT

The paper throws light on the diversity of living Gymnosperms in Tamilnadu state of India where these are mostly confined to the hills like Kodaikanal, Ooty, Yercard etc. Gymnosperms are represented in the state by 55 species under 18 genera and 8 families. *Cycas circinalis*, *Podocarpus wallichiana* and *Gnetum species* are indigenous while remaining 51 species are introduced species but very well established at hill stations.

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Tamilnadu was carved out of the erstwhile 'Presidency of Madras', so as to include the predominantly Tamil-speaking areas. Until 1969, it was known as 'Madras State'. Madras (Chennai) is the capital of Tamil Nadu. The State lies between 8⁰' and 13⁰35'N and 76⁰15' and 80⁰20'E situated on tip of Indian Peninsula. It is bounded on the north by Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh, on the east by the Bay of Bengal, on the south by the Indian Ocean on the south-west by the Arabian Sea and on the west by Kerala.

The State occupies 4.08 per cent of the total area of the country and covers an area of 130069sq km. It has a coast line of 990 km and a land boundary of 1200km. There are some islands in the Gulf of Manaar and Palk Strait. These are collectively known as Rameswaram and Krusadia group of islands. The chain of twenty coral islands namely Shingle, Krusadai, Pullivasal, Pulli, Manauli, Musal, Muli, Valai, Talairi, Appa, Balayamunai, Anaipar, Nalla Tanni, Shuli, Uppu Tanni, Kairya, Vilangu, Koswari, Van and Pandyan and several reefs, extend along the northern shore of the Gulf of Manaar. Some islands are separated from one another by short distance of shallow waters. During low tide it appears as if these constitute a single island. The State is now divided into the following 15 districts: Chengalpattu, Coimbatore, Dharmapur, Kanniyakumari, Madhurai, Nilgiri, North Arcot, Periyar, Pudukkottai, Ramanathapuram, Salem, South Arcot, Thanjavur, Tiruchchirappalli and Tirunelveli.

Present study is based on scrutiny of literature (Mathew 1969, Nair & Henry *et al* 1989). and study of the specimens housed in herbaria of BSI at Coimbatore and Institute of Sciences, Mumbai. Species of *Gnetum*, *Cycas circinalis* and *Podocarpus wallichiana* are indigenous to the state while other 51 gymnosperms enlisted in Table I are introduced exotics which have established themselves very well at hills like Kodaikanal, Ooty etc.

Table 1: LIVING GYMNOSPERMS IN TAMILNADU STATE OF INDIA

Family	Local Name (s)	Locality
Cycadaceae	<i>Cycas circinalis</i> (<i>Avinchil-Tamil</i>)	Chengalpattu, Coimbatore Kanyakumari, Madurai, Ramnathpuram, Tirunelveli
	<i>Cycas revoluta</i> (<i>Sago-cycas-Eng.</i>)	Planted
Ginkgoaceae	Ginkgo biloba	Planted on hills.
Podocarpaceae	Podocarpus wallichiana (<i>Nageia wallichiana</i> , <i>Podocarpus latifolia</i> , <i>Decussocarpus wallichianus</i>)	Coimbatore, Kanniyakumari Nilgiri, Tirunelveli.
	Podocarpus brevifolius (<i>Podocarpus nerifolius</i> var. <i>brevifolius</i>).	Planted on hills.
	Podocarpus elongata	Planted on hills.
	Podocarpus taxifolia	Planted on hills.
Araucariaceae	Agathis australis	Planted on hills.
	Agathis robusta	Planted on hills.
	Araucaria bidwillii	Planted on hills.
	Araucaria heterophylla	Planted on hills.
	Araucaria columnaris	Planted on hills. (Nilgiri)
	Araucaria cunninghamii	Planted on hills. (Nilgiri)
	Araucaria rulei	Planted on hills.
Pinaceae	Cedrus deodara (<i>Pinus deodara</i>)	Planted on hills.
	Pinus canariensis	Planted
	Pinus echinata	Grown on Hills
	Pinus Khasya	Grown on Hills
	Pinus palustris	Planted on hills.
	Pinus patula	Planted on hills.
	Pinus pinaster	Planted on hills.
	Pinus pinea	Planted on hills.
	Pinus radiata	Planted on hills.
	Pinus roxburghii (<i>Pinus longifolia</i>)	Planted on hills.
	Pinus sabiniana	Planted on hills.
	Pinus torreyana	Planted on hills.

	Pinus wallichiana (<i>Pinus excelsa</i>)	Planted on hills.
Taxodiaceae	Cryptomeria japonica (<i>Cupressus japonica</i>)	Planted on hills.
	Cunninghamia lanceolata (<i>Pinus lanceolata</i> <i>Cunninghamia sinensis</i>)	Planted (Kodaikanal)
	Sequoia sempervirens	Planted on hills.
	Taxodium disticum (<i>Cupressus disticha</i>)	Planted on hills.
Cupressaceae	Callitris oblonga	Planted on hills.
	Callitris rhomboidea	Planted on hills.
	Chamaecyparis lawsoniana (<i>Cupressus lawsoniana</i>)	Planted (Kodaikanal)
	Cupressus arizonica	Planted on hills.
	Cupressus corneyana	Planted on hills.
	Cupressus glauca	Planted on hills.
	Cupressus goveniana	Planted on hills.
	Cupressus lusitanica	Planted on hills.
	Cupressus lindleyi	Planted
	Cupressus macrocarpa	Planted
	Cupressus obtusa	Planted on hills.
	Cupressus sempervirens	Planted on hills.
	Cupressus torulosa	Planted on hills.
	Juniperus bermudiana	Planted on hills.
	Juniperus pachyphlaea	Planted on hills.
	Juniperus procera	Planted on hills.
	Juniperus virginiana	Planted on hills.
	Libocedrus decurrens	Planted on hills.
	Thuja japonica	Planted on hills.
	Thuja orientalis	Planted on hills.
	Widdringtonia juniperoides	Planted (Kodaikanal)
	Widdringtonia whytei	Planted (Kodaikanal)
Gnetaceae	Gnetum contractum	Nilgiri (<i>cf.</i> Henry et al 1989) (in ghats)
	Gnetum ula (Anapendutamil)	Coimbatore, Madurai, Nilgiri, Salem, Tiruchchirappalli, Tirunelveli. (in ghats)

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