

AGRICULTURE · C4S COURSES

Agasthyamala Biosphere Reserve

28 September 2026

Source: The Hindu

Context A comprehensive checklist documented **3,261 flowering plant species** in the **Agasthyamala Biosphere Reserve**.

Location and Status

- Spans the **southern extremity of the Western Ghats**, straddling **Kerala and Tamil Nadu**
- Area: about **3,500 sq km**; highest point **Agasthyarkoodam peak, 1,868 m**
- **Notified by the Government of India in 2001**
- Inscribed in the **UNESCO World Network of Biosphere Reserves** under the **Man and the Biosphere Programme** in **2016**
- One of **South India's four** biosphere reserves, with **Nilgiri, Gulf of Mannar** and **Seshachalam Hills**

Major Plant Families

The most species-rich families recorded are:

Plant Family	Number of Taxa
Fabaceae	349
Rubiaceae	194
Poaceae	193
Orchidaceae	168

Important Facts for Exams

- **Biosphere Reserve:** A protected area designed to conserve biodiversity while allowing sustainable use of natural resources.
- **Endemic Species:** A species naturally restricted to a particular geographical area.
- **Steno-endemic:** A species or taxon restricted to a very small or specific geographical/habitat range.
- **Biogeography:** Study of the geographical distribution of living organisms.
- **Angiosperms:** Flowering plants that produce seeds enclosed within fruits.
- **Fabaceae:** The **legume/pea family**, including beans, peas, lentils, chickpeas and many other plants.
- **Rubiaceae:** The **coffee family**, which includes coffee, quinine and many tropical flowering plants.
- **Poaceae:** The **grass family**, including rice, wheat, maize, sugarcane and bamboo.
- **Orchidaceae:** The **orchid family**, known for its highly diverse and often ornamental flowering plants.
- **Western Ghats:** A major mountain system along India's western coast and one of the world's important biodiversity hotspots.
- **Nilgiri (1986)** was India's first biosphere reserve
- **Kani tribe** — known for the **Arogyapacha** plant, the basis of India's first **access and benefit-sharing** model under the **Biological Diversity Act, 2002**

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