

Headline	230 plant species face extinction		
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230 plant species face extinction

THARANYA ARUMUGAM

RED LIST: Initiatives must be taken to prevent this, says institute

NO fewer than 230 plant species are on the verge of extinction in Peninsular Malaysia.

This is the sobering figure provided by the Forest Research Institute of Malaysia (FRIM) based on its latest 'Malaysia Plant Red List' research.

FRIM Forest Biodiversity division director Dr Saw Leng Guan, who is behind the list, to date had identified over 8,300 plant species in the peninsula, out of more than 20,000 species in the country.

Saw pointed out that of the 8,300 species, 975 plants were selected for conservation status assessment last year, out of which, 411 plants

(42.2 per cent) were classified under the "threatened category".

Based on the assessment, 97 species (10 per cent) were listed as "critically endangered", of which 33 of them were plants threatened with extinction; while 133 (13.6 per cent) were classified as "endangered", 148 (15.2 per cent) as "vulnerable" and 29 (three per cent) as "rare".

Among the critically endangered species are the *Dipterocarpus coriaceus* (*keruing paya*), *Dipterocarpus semivestitus* (*keruing padi*), *Parashorea globosa* (*meranti pasir daun besar*), *Hopea bilitonesis* and *Vatica flavida* (*resak padi*), all of which can be only found in Perak.

The *Dipterocarpus sarawakensis* (*keruing layang*) are found in Terengganu, *Hopea subalata* (*mer-*

awan kanching) in Selangor, and *Hopea auriculata* in Johor, Pahang and Perak.

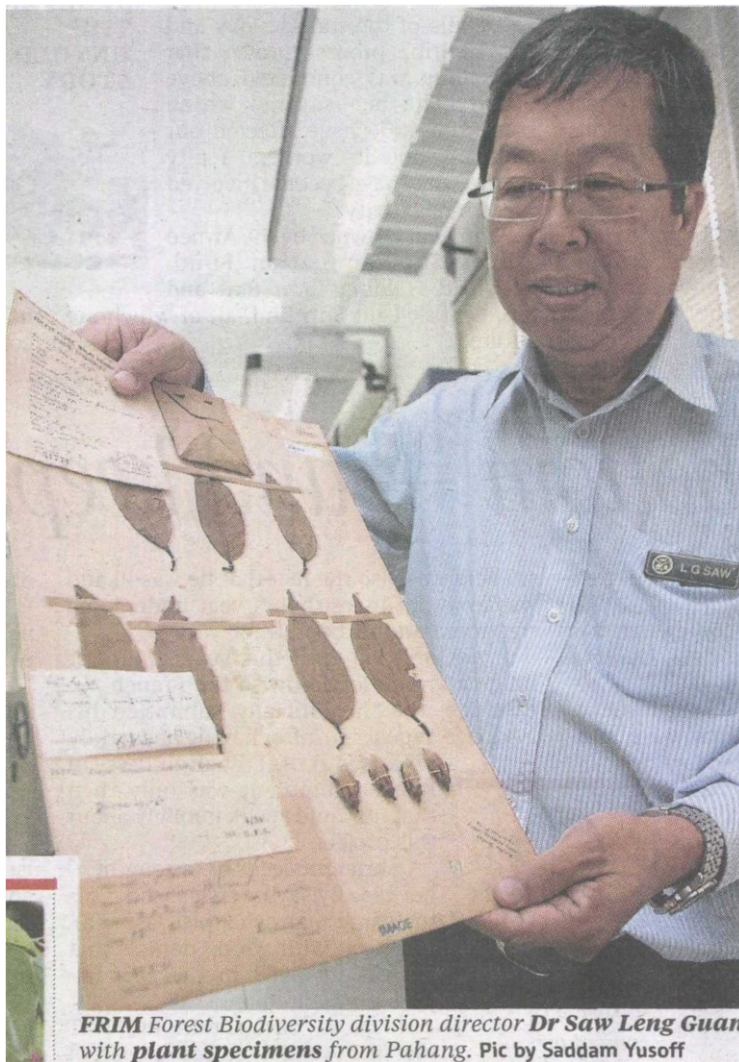
Meanwhile, 182 (18.7 per cent) of the species were classified as "near threatened", 327 (33.5 per cent) were labelled as "least concern" and 55 (5.6 per cent) were listed as "data deficient" (insufficient information for a proper assessment of conservation status to be made).

"The percentage of species in each of the conservation status category has been consistent for almost two decades now," Saw said, adding that initiatives must be taken to prevent the critically endangered species from extinction.

To date, four plant species have been officially declared as extinct in Malaysia. They are the *Oreogrammitis crispata* Parris and *Oreogrammitis kunstleri* Parris from the Grammitidaceae family, the *Begonia eiuromischa* (woolly-stalked Begonia) from the Begoniaceae family and the *Shorea kuantanensis*, endemic to Malaysia from the Dipterocarpaceae family.

The four species were officially declared extinct in the International Union for Conservation of Nature Red List 2010.

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FRIM Forest Biodiversity division director **Dr Saw Leng Guan** with **plant specimens** from Pahang. Pic by Saddam Yusoff

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Conservation Status Assessment for Selected Plants in Peninsular Malaysia in 2012

Conservation status	Number of species	Percentage (%)
Extinct	4	0.4
Critically endangered	97	10
Endangered	133	13.6
Vulnerable	148	15.2
Rare	29	3.0
Total number of threatened species	411	42.2
Near threatened	182	18.7
Least concern	327	33.5
Data deficient	55	5.6
Total	975	100

EXTINCT SPECIES

Oreogrammitis crispatula Parris
Oreogrammitis kunstleri Parris
Begonia eiromischa (commonly known as woolly-stalked Begonia)
Shorea kuantanensis

CRITICALLY ENDANGERED SPECIES

- 1. *Dipterocarpus coriaceus* (keruing paya)**
Distribution: Perak and Sarawak
Habitat: Lowland forests along inner margins of peat swamp forests
- 2. *Dipterocarpus sarawakensis* (keruing layang)**
Distribution: Terengganu and Sarawak
Habitat: Lowland forests at altitudes of 400m
- 3. *Dipterocarpus semivestitus* (keruing padi)**
Distribution: Perak
Habitat: Low-lying swampy grounds
- 4. *Hopea auriculata***
Distribution: Johor, Pahang and Perak
Habitat: Hills and ridges between 250m to 650m altitude
- 5. *Hopea bilitonensis***
Distribution: Perak
Habitat: Limestone hills
- 6. *Hopea subalata* (merawan kanching)**
Distribution: Selangor
Habitat: Lowland dipterocarp forests
- 7. *Parashorea globosa* (meranti pasir daun besar)**
Distribution: Perak
Habitat: Lowland dipterocarp forests
- 8. *Vatica flavida* (resak padi)**
Distribution: Perak
Habitat: Freshwater swamp forests in the lowland dipterocarp forests



Hopea auriculata

Source: 'Malaysia Plant Red List' Research Pamphlet No. 129
Forest Research Institute Malaysia