

Meet the new tree from Cameroon named after Leonardo DiCaprio

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An international team of researchers has now reported a new tropical tree from the Ebo Forest in Cameroon and named it after American actor and conservationist Leonardo DiCaprio. The [paper published yesterday in the journal PeerJ](#) explains that the actor's name was chosen as he had "lobbied extensively on social media to draw attention to threats for the numerous rare Ebo species from the logging concession that had been announced at Ebo earlier that year."

The tree, named *Uvariopsis dicaprio*, is four metres tall, with 15 cm long leaves, and bears bunches of large, glossy, bright yellow-green flowers on its trunk. The tree is endemic to the Ebo forest and is so far only known from the lower submontane forest which has an elevation of 850 metres. The area of occupation of *U. dicaprio* is estimated as 4 sq. km.

With the recognition of *U. dicaprio*, 20 species of *Uvariopsis* are now accepted and the highest species diversity is found in Cameroon.

The new tree was assessed as 'critically endangered', as its habitat remains unprotected and faces threats from logging, conversion to plantations, and mining.

"There are still thousands of plant species and maybe millions of fungal species out there that we don't know about...This natural habitat that they're growing in – especially forests, but other habitats, too, is increasingly and more rapidly being destroyed by us humans without knowing what's there," one of the authors, Dr Martin Cheek, was quoted by the *BBC*. He is from the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, United Kingdom.

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