

New tree species named after Muthuvar tribe

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A new tree species of the genus *Cryptocarya* spotted in Edamalakkudy in Idukki district has been named after a tribe from the locality.

'*Cryptocarya muthuvariana*' has been named so to honour the Muthuvar tribe and as it was discovered in their neighbourhood, researchers responsible for the identification said.

Annales Botanici Fennici, a scientific journal brought out by the Finnish Zoological and Botanical Publishing Board, has published the findings on the new species by R. Jagadeesan, former researcher, Department of Botany, University of Kerala; A. Gangaprasad, Professor, Department of Botany, and Director, Centre for Biodiversity Conservation, University of Kerala; and P. Suresh Kumar and Sam P. Mathew of the Jawaharlal Nehru Tropical Botanic Garden and Research Institute (JNTBGRI), Palode.

During survey

Belonging to the Lauraceae family, the genus *Cryptocarya* comprises over 300 species that are widely distributed over South America, South Africa, Madagascar, Asia, Australia and Oceania. The researchers came across the new species during surveys on endemic and threatened species of the Western Ghats. Detailed studies showed it to be a distinct species.

'*Cryptocarya muthuvariana*' grows to a height of about 10 to 15 m and is characterised by not-too-broad leaves. The researchers managed to spot only around 10 individual trees of the species in the locality. The Western Ghats is home to around nine species of the genus *Cryptocarya*, they said.

The team has underscored the need to study aspects related to ecological importance, medicinal value and sustainable use of the new tree species.

Source: <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/kerala/new-tree-species-named-after-muthuvar-tribe/article37579221.ece>