

# WHEN VISITORS BECOME BURDEN

## Invasive plant species

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Ornamental plant nurseries in Wayanad, Kerala



Abandoned garden in Wayanad



Mikania micrantha growing vigorously at Wayanad



Lantana Camara seeds and bird dropping inside forest



Lantana camara in Wayanad forest

Invasive plant species were introduced to Kerala for ornamental, floral or agricultural purposes. It primarily began in the modern Indian period (19th Century) and is still in use today, which we can obtain from nurseries. A large number of ornamental plant nurseries are found in Kerala

People abandoning their gardens as well as change in their attitudes towards the plants, allowing the invasives to spread to different geographical areas in Kerala. Invasive plants pose a serious threat to native biota it have a cascading effect on other organisms.

Invasive species outcompete native plants and establish themselves. Displacement of native biota by invasive plants are a serious concern for health and sustainability of ecosystems. Invasive plants contribute to spread of forest pests and impact the resilience of forest ecosystem.

Lantana produces large quantity of easily germinating seeds which are dispersed by herbivores and avian frugivores. The seeds contain allelochemicals inhibiting growth of native plants resulting in lack of forage for wild herbivores and increased conflicts between human and wildlife.

Invasive plant species rapidly spread, often to a point causing harm to the environment, economy or human health. Efforts to control and eradicate invasive plants species are important to preserve biodiversity, economic interests and maintain integrity of natural areas

