

# COMMON TREES OF KERALA

N Sasidharan



**Kerala State Biodiversity Board**

Thiruvananthapuram

2010



KSBB Handbook No. 1

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**Kerala State Biodiversity Board**

Pallimukku, Pettah P.O., Thiruvananthapuram 695 024

Kerala, INDIA

2010



## **Common Trees of Kerala (English)**

Biodiversity Handbook No. 1

### **Prepared by**

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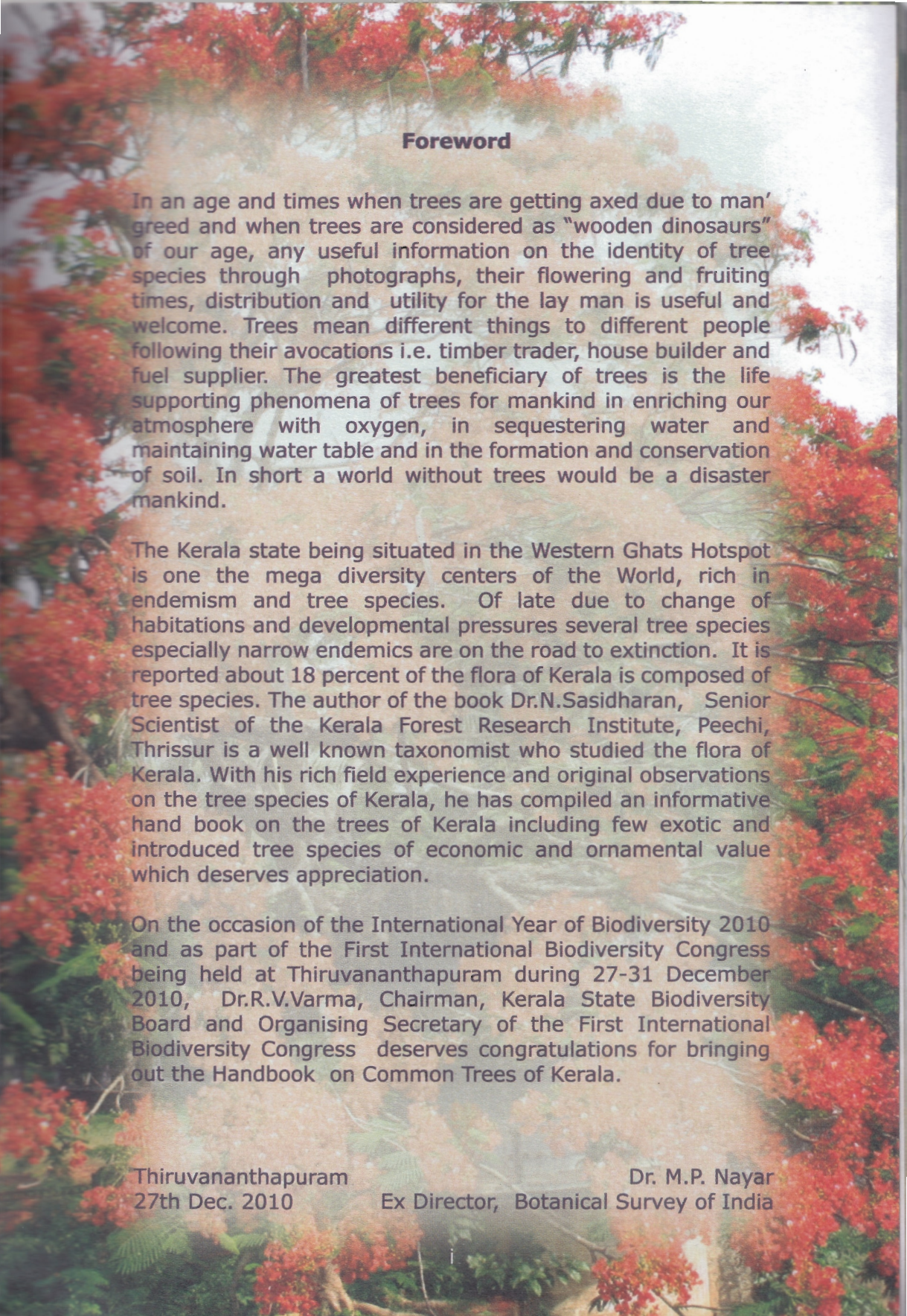




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## Foreword

In an age and times when trees are getting axed due to man's greed and when trees are considered as "wooden dinosaurs" of our age, any useful information on the identity of tree species through photographs, their flowering and fruiting times, distribution and utility for the lay man is useful and welcome. Trees mean different things to different people following their avocations i.e. timber trader, house builder and fuel supplier. The greatest beneficiary of trees is the life supporting phenomena of trees for mankind in enriching our atmosphere with oxygen, in sequestering water and maintaining water table and in the formation and conservation of soil. In short a world without trees would be a disaster mankind.

The Kerala state being situated in the Western Ghats Hotspot is one the mega diversity centers of the World, rich in endemism and tree species. Of late due to change of habitations and developmental pressures several tree species especially narrow endemics are on the road to extinction. It is reported about 18 percent of the flora of Kerala is composed of tree species. The author of the book Dr.N.Sasidharan, Senior Scientist of the Kerala Forest Research Institute, Peechi, Thrissur is a well known taxonomist who studied the flora of Kerala. With his rich field experience and original observations on the tree species of Kerala, he has compiled an informative hand book on the trees of Kerala including few exotic and introduced tree species of economic and ornamental value which deserves appreciation.

On the occasion of the International Year of Biodiversity 2010 and as part of the First International Biodiversity Congress being held at Thiruvananthapuram during 27-31 December 2010, Dr.R.V.Varma, Chairman, Kerala State Biodiversity Board and Organising Secretary of the First International Biodiversity Congress deserves congratulations for bringing out the Handbook on Common Trees of Kerala.

Thiruvananthapuram  
27th Dec. 2010

Dr. M.P. Nayar  
Ex Director, Botanical Survey of India






## Preface

The Kerala State Biodiversity Board has initiated a programme to bring out a series of handbooks such as Common trees, Medicinal Plants, Mammals, Fishes, Alien weeds, birds and Aquatic Plants etc. for creating awareness on the Bio-resources of Kerala and also to facilitate the preparation of People's Biodiversity Registers (PBRs). The preparation of the Handbook on the Common Trees of Kerala was entrusted with Dr. N. Sasidharan, Kerala Forest Research Institute, Peechi, considering his vast knowledge and filed experience on the Flora of Kerala, particularly tree species. The handbook on the Common Trees of Kerala brought out by him deals with 164 tree species which are found in homesteads, avenues, parks, gardens, orchards, plantations. The correct scientific names, important synonyms, common names and trade names are provided along with description of the trees. Glossary of the technical terms provided will help to understand the meaning of the technical terms used to describe the trees. The excellent photographs provided for each tree are quite sufficient to recognize the trees. Separate indices are also provided to scientific names, common/trade names. Therefore, it is easy to identify the tree by referring to their common/trade names. Another noteworthy feature of the handbook is that both timber and non-timber uses of the trees are provided separately as an appendix. This helps the user to find out the different uses of the trees. I am sure this handbook on the Common Trees of Kerala will be a very useful publication for the field level works who are involved with the work of PBR and also the students and public at large. As Chairman of the Kerala State Biodiversity Board, I congratulate Dr. Sasidharan for preparing this Handbook in the most acceptable form.

Thiruvananthapuram  
27th December 2010

Dr. R.V. Varma  
Chairman  
Kerala State Biodiversity Board





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## Introduction

Situated along the southwest corner of India, the state of Kerala enjoys a tropical climate, and is endowed with a luxuriant vegetation rich in species. A notable feature of the flora of Kerala is the preponderance tree species. About 18 percent of the flora is composed of trees. The forests are now confined mostly to the highlands. The forests in the midland and lowland regions have almost vanished due to expansion of agriculture and plantation activities. However, there exist several sacred groves, which are relics of the past forests which existed in the plains and midlands. These sacred groves abode many endemic as well as rare trees. During the past decades, several exotic trees of horticultural and ornamental importance have been introduced in the State and raised in orchards, plantations, planted in the parks, avenues and also grown in homesteads. There is no authentic publication on the common trees in Kerala on their correct name, uses, etc. This book deals with 164 trees which are common in the sacred groves, villages, avenues, parks and homesteads on their correct scientific name, synonyms, common names, trade names, description with emphasis on vegetative and field characters, flowering and fruiting periods, geographical distribution and uses. Photographs depicting the salient features of the trees are also provided for easy identification.





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