

New Green Cardamom Species

Why in News?

Recently, an international team of researchers have identified 2 new species that are close cousins to green cardamom.

- **Green cardamom** - It is the most valuable spice plant in the world and of huge economic importance.
- **Taxonomy**
 - **Scientific name** - Elettaria cardamomum.
 - **Genus** - Elettaria, now **has 7 species**.
- It is based on the spice's old Malayalam name, Elletari which is used by Hendrik van Rheede in the 17th century.
- **Seed capsules** - It provides the commercial green cardamom.
- It is known as **Queen of Spices**.
- **2 new species** - Elettaria facifera and Elettaria tulipifera.
- **Discovered in** - Western Ghats regions of Kerala.

Elettaria Facifera

- **Found in** - Kerala's **Periyar Tiger Reserve** in Idukki district.
- **Morphology** - It is distinguished by sessile leaves, erect flowering shoots that are separate from the leafy shoots, and pure white labellum with purple-red markings.
- **Mannan tribe** - They refer to it as the **Vai noki elam**, (loosely, Open-mouth cardamom) due to the fruit's resemblance to an open mouth.

Elettaria Tulipifera

- **Found in** - **Agasthyamalai hills** in Thiruvananthapuram district.
- **Morphology** - It has strikingly beautiful tulip-shaped inflorescence and large, bright to dark red, whorled bracts.



- **Conservation** – The researchers have underlined the need for conservation efforts as both species face threats.

Reference

[The Hindu| 2 New Green Cardamom Species](#)

