

IUCN RED LIST - ETHIOPIA

ARBONETH - The Ethiopian Arboretum Network

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The Floral Biodiversity of Ethiopia



The East African countries, among them also Ethiopia, have one of the richest assemblages of plants in the African continent. 24 percent of the species are endemic to the region and the floral diversity harbors in total more than 8000 plant species, whereof various native populations are useful or economical important plants.

But as a consequence of predominantly poverty, livestock pressure and other conflicts, the rich and unique natural biodiversity of Ethiopia is clearly threatened. Moreover, just a few plant conservation activities are presently undertaken in Ethiopia, despite the threat status of the floral heritage.

IUCN Red List of Threatened Species



Introduced in 1994 by the IUCN Global Species Programme, the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species has become a worldwide standard in order to determine the risk of extinction of floral and faunal species.

The aim of the IUCN Red List is the provision of information and analyses on the status, trends and threats to species to encourage and accelerate action for biodiversity conservation.

Ambitions of the IUCN Red List:

- establishment of a baseline from which to monitor the change in status of species
- provide a global context for the establishment of conservation priorities at the local level
- monitor, on a continuing basis, the status of a representative selection of species (as biodiversity indicators) that cover all the major ecosystems of the world.

(IUCNREDLIST.ORG 2015)

Red List of Endemic Trees & Shrubs of Ethiopia and Eritrea

The Red List of Endemic Trees & Shrubs of Ethiopia and Eritrea



Jose Luis Vivero, Ensamu Keibessa and Sebsebe Demissew

Primary importance in the implementation of conservation activities is the **collection of information of the abundance and distribution of threatened plant species**. Published in 2005, the report "*The Red List of Endemic Trees & Shrubs of Ethiopia and Eritrea*" was the first complete assessment of the endemic tree species in Ethiopia and Eritrea.

Due to the historical and biogeographical links between Ethiopia and Eritrea, the plants of the two countries are generally studied together. The tree flora of both countries together consists of an estimated 1100 species. The publication summarizes currently available information concerning threatened trees & shrubs of Ethiopia and Eritrea and makes a clearly appeal for further research and conservation action.

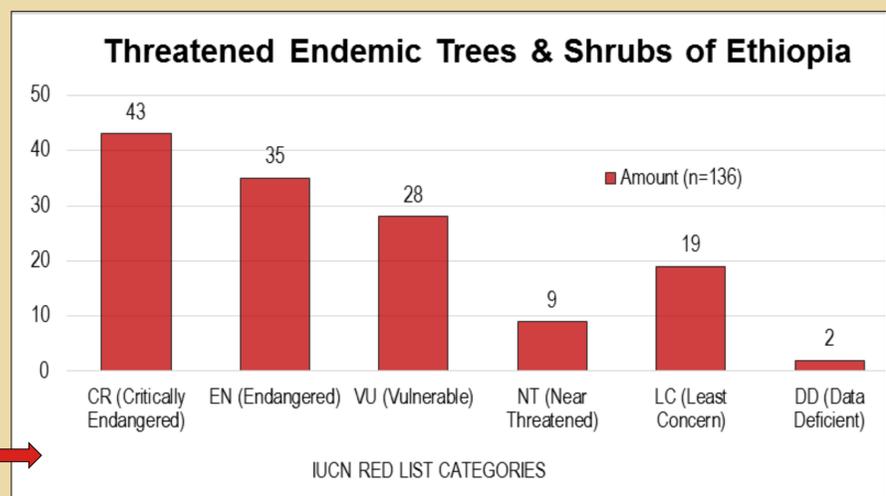
The evaluation and assessment of the conservation status of the woody taxa of Ethiopia and Eritrea is an important first step in planning sustainable use and conservation activities. The urgent need to build on the scanty information available about threatened plants of Ethiopia and Eritrea, was the reason behind this effort. Furthermore, the assessment wants to stimulate conservation interest in, and action for, the many rare and endemic species found in the area.



(FFI, IUCN ET AL. 2005)

Threatened Endemic Trees & Shrubs of Ethiopia

- In total, **136 endemic trees and shrubs** are listed on the IUCN Red List of Endemic Trees & Shrubs of Ethiopia and Eritrea (FFI, IUCN ET AL. 2005).



- In Ethiopia, only 19 endemic trees and shrubs are categorized as least concern, while on the whole 43 are classified as critically endangered and 35 as endangered.

Current Conservation Measures

→ The Convention on Biological Diversity

- In 1994, Ethiopia became a party of the *Convention on Biological Diversity* (CBD). The Convention recognizes the need for attention to be focused on rare and threatened species. Moreover Ethiopia committed to the CBD Global Strategy for Plant Conservation

→ Traditional conservation practices

- Traditional conservation practices are predominantly present in the highland areas of Ethiopia and have contributed long-term to the conservation of forest diversity. These practices are:
 - farm forestry (south-western highlands)
 - tree-based soil and water management (Konso)
 - forest-based resource management (Borena)

→ Deficits in the current conservation measures

- many parts of Ethiopia have not been thoroughly explored from a botanical perspective → especially some high mountains (above 4000m) have never been explored by botanists
- as a result, a variety of plant species are probably still undiscovered in Ethiopia
- no field research is being conducted to assess in detail the threat status of plants
- low funds are available to tackle conservation issues

(FFI, IUCN ET AL. 2005)

Biodiversity and Social Issues



The extent of poverty, hunger and lack of means in Ethiopia is one of the highest in the world and make these problems a major social issue in the country. Regarding this, it is important to be aware of the fact, that these problems are closely interwoven with the national biodiversity: wild plants and animal products are for instances sources of food, medicines, income-generating activities, building materials for poor rural households, firewood and many more.

→ **Consequently the preservation and the protection of the national biodiversity also effects the social issues of Ethiopia.**

Efficient strategies to conserve the floral biodiversity of the country should involve actions such as:

- local cultivation, non-destructive harvesting techniques and use of alternative species
- awareness campaigns, capacity building, knowledge and local empowerment in resource management.

Cordeauxia edulis – an important wild shrub to pastoral communities

A good example for the importance of wild plants in pastoral areas to communities is *Cordeauxia edulis*. The leguminous shrub can be found in Ethiopia semi-arid bushland areas on sandy soils up to a height of 600 meters.

Uses of *Cordeauxia edulis*:

- firewood, fodder, bee forage, as a tannin, for soil conservation and as a living fence
- the seed is eatable and provides a high nutritive value
- leaves serve as an infusion and the extract is used as a dye

(FFI, IUCN ET AL. 2005)

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