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[\[Ecology\] Taiwan Wild Plants Red Book Indicates 1/5 Native Species Endangered](#)[Ecology] Taiwan Wild Plants Red Book Indicates 1/5 Native Species Endangered ([Chinese Version](#))

Taiwan Environmental Information Center (2012/01/17) A three-year survey “Taiwan Wild Plants Red Book” by Endemic Species Research Institute, Council of Agriculture and Taiwan Society of Plant Systematics indicates that 21.5% of the some 4000 species of native wild vascular plants in Taiwan are listed as endangered according to IUCN's standards. The report urges constructive measures to protect them.

Council of Agriculture's Manual of Taiwan Vascular Plants indicates that while there are above three hundred thousand plant species in the world, the number of the species of vascular plants in Taiwan reaches above 4000, about one fourth of which are endemic. However, only five species among them are legally protected under Cultural Heritage Conservation Law.

Assistant Research Fellow Ho-Ming CHANG at Endemic Species Research Institute addresses that the other species than the protected 5 ones are all exposed to danger unless they happen to grow in the protection zone, no matter how significant they are with regard to ecology, evolutionary history, bio/geographical features, species rarity or the level of threat they are facing.

Between 2008 and 2010, Endemic Species Research Institute and Taiwan Society of Plant Systematics cooperate on assessing the levels of endangered threat of the local vascular plants. During the three years, the survey has covered 4174 species, and one of them is considered as extinct (EX), 3 extinct in the wild (EW) such as *Rhododendron kanehirai* Wilson, 9 regionally extinct (RE), 163 critically endangered (CR) like *Pyrenaria buisanensis* and *Lilium speciosum* var. *gloriosoides*, 265 endangered (EN) like *Lycopodium salvinoides* (Hert.) Tagawa and *Bulbophyllum kuanwuensis*, 480 vulnerable (VU) like *Rhododendron chilanshanense* Kurashige and *Camellia japonica*, 394 near threatened (NT) like *Chamaecyparis*, 2570 least concern (LC) and 289 of them are classified as “data deficient” (DD). The number of the species of the categories above VU level is 921, while the number of the endangered species is 908, taking 21.5% of the evaluated species.

CHANG indicates, the top threat the wild plants suffer is from human activities, including collection and plant trade; besides, the development that destroys plant habitats is also a big threat.

Although now we have the Red Book for the reference of the promotion of biodiversity conservation, environment monitoring, sustainable use of resources, and homeland planning, without legal ground, the book cannot be used to actively protect the plants. Departmental Secretary of Endemic Species Research Institute Jia-dong YANG says, many countries design their wildlife conservation laws in accordance with red books.

CHANG says, the result of the survey is now being verified, and a red book council will be held to discuss the measures of protection. Beside of the design of the measures, Endemic Species Research Institute will also take the charge of the execution of the relevant decisions.

Further Information:

[Taiwan Environmental Information Center 2012/01/17](#) (Chinese)

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[National Science Council International Cooperation Sci-Tech Newsbrief](#)

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