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Nepenthes khasiana

Nepenthes khasiana Hook f., is the only representative member from the monotypic family Nepenthaceae, one of the largest genera among the insectivorous plants known to occur in India, recorded from the Jarain area of the Jaintia Hills, the Baghmara area of the Garo Hills and adjacent area of Meghalaya at an altitude of 1000-1500m. Mostly found in open rocky slopes amidst the grass, forest edges and dense humid primary forests. But this endemic species now has become threatened in its natural habitat due to many anthropogenic activities including wanton destruction of its habitat by coal mining and harvesting for medicinal preparations. These insectivorous species are with attractive colors, sugary nectar as well as sweet scents, which help them to attract and kill their prey. They show a modification in their leaf, where the anterior end of the leaf extends as a tendril, forming a cup-like structure with an immovable lid at the end. They secrete the digestive enzymes for the digestion of their prey. The pitcher is so slippery that once the prey comes down, unable to escape from the trap. They usually prefer acidic soil with a deficiency of nitrogen. The pitchers primarily gain nitrogen and phosphorus through the trapped insects to compensate for the

nutrient deficiency in the soil. *N. khasiana* is a climbing shrub, erect, prostrate or scandent ranges from a few centimeters to several meters in height. Flowering season is from June to October. Medicinally this insectivorous plant is very much important, especially for the indigenous people of Meghalaya. They use different parts of this plant in various ailments like cataracts, night blindness, stomach ailments, skin diseases, and female diseases, etc. The liquid present in the pitcher of this plant is taken in the morning as a digestive tonic by the local community of Meghalaya and also the fine powder of the pitchers mixed with water is taken orally in cholera. Pharmacologically this climber shows insecticidal, molluscidal, and antifungal activities. Due to the presence of these potentials, the collection and other threats are happening and now *N. khasiana* is a rare and gravely threatened species. The conservation of this species in its natural habitat is also dependent on the local communities. It also needs urgent -situ and ex-situ conservation.

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