

National & Culturally Important Plants of Commonwealth Countries: Asia & Pacific

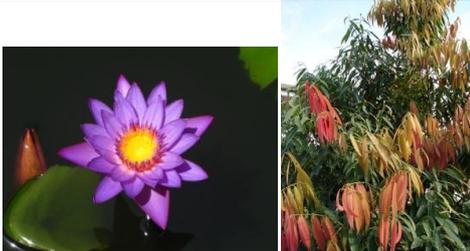
ASIA	
	<p>BANGLADESH The water lily or Shalpa is the national plant and the mango is the national tree. <i>Nymphaea nouchali</i> (National Plant) Shapla (Bengali) <i>Mangifera indica</i> (National Tree) Cuta (Bengali)</p>
	<p>BRUNEI The national flower of Brunei is the Simpoh, Simpoh or Simpoh. This beautiful yellow flower can grow in lowland forests, swamps and even on sand. There are some species which only grow in Brunei <i>Dillenia</i> species (National Plant)</p>
 	<p>INDIA The Lotus is important in India culture mythology and the Banyan Tree is sometimes described as immortal because it continually regrows by sending down roots from its branches <i>Nelumbo nucifera</i> (National Plant) <i>Ficus benghalensis</i> (National Tree)</p>
	<p>MALAYSIA The Bunga Raya or rose mallow was chosen as national flower in 1960. The red petals represent the courage, life and rapid growth of the Malaysians, and the five petals represent the National Principles. <i>Hibiscus rosa-sinensis</i> (National Plant)</p>
 	<p>The MALDIVES The national flower of the Maldivian Islands is the Fiyaathoshi Finifenmaa or pink rose and the national tree is the coconut palm. <i>Rosa polyantha</i> (National Plant) <i>Cocos nucifera</i> (National Tree)</p>
 	<p>PAKISTAN The official flower of Pakistan is the Chambeli or Jasmine and the national tree is the Deodar or Himalayan Cedar. <i>Jasminum officinale</i> (National Plant) <i>Cedrus deodora</i> (National Tree)</p>



SINGAPORE

The orchid known as the **Singapore orchid** or **Princess Aloha Orchid** or also as the **Vanda "Miss Joaquim" Orchid** is the national plant, chosen in 1981. It is a hybrid orchid bred by Agnes Joaquim in the nineteenth century.

Vanda hookeriana x *Vanda teres* ('Miss Joaquim')



SRI LANKA

The red and blue waterlily, **Nil Mânel** or **Nil Mahanel**, was chosen as the national plant of Sri Lanka in 1986. It has great symbolic and cultural value, it can be used as medicine and the roots eaten. The **Ceylon Ironwood** was also selected as the national tree in 1986

Nymphaea stellata (National Plant)

Mesua ferrea (National Plant)

PACIFIC REGION



AUSTRALIA

The **Golden Wattle** of Australia was formally adopted as the national plant in 1988 and the 1st of September is Wattle Day. The bark is used for tannin and the flowers can be used in perfumery. The Australian Coat of Arms includes a wattle wreath.

Acacia pycnantha (National Plant)



FIJI

The **Tagimaucia**, a vine with red and white flowers, grows only in the highland rainforest of the Island of Taveuni. There is a legend that the flower grew from the tears of a girl forbidden to marry the boy of her choice.

Medinilla waterhousei (National Plant)



KIRIBATI

Te aitoa (*Lumnitzera littoea*) has red flowers which are used in garlands and the wood is used for building and fish traps. It features in many songs and legends.

Te kiaiai or **te rau** (*Hibiscus tiliaceus*) is used for fire sticks and outrigger booms. The bark fibre is used for skirts (riri) and the leaves are used for wrapping food.



NAURU

The flower of the local Tomano tree is depicted on the flag of Nauru.



NEW ZEALAND

The official national flower of New Zealand is the **Kowhai** (*Sophora* species) with its distinctive yellow flowers. However the silver fern or **Punga/Ponga** (*Cyathea dealbata*) is also a recognisable symbol of New Zealand.

Sophora species (National Plant)

Cyathea dealbata



PAPUA NEW GUINEA

The spectacular **Sepik Blue Orchid** grows on trees only in the rainforests of the Sepik Highlands.

Dendrobium lasianthera



SAMOA

Teuila or Red Ginger has a striking red bracts and is the national flower of Samoa. There is an annual Teuila Festival in Samoa. Cultivated varieties are grown in many parts of the world.

Alpinia purpurata (National Plant)



SOLOMON ISLANDS

The Sago Palm is used for thatch on houses and to make the foodstuff sago.

Metroxylon sagu



TONGA

Heilala is the only plant endemic to Tonga. It is used to make necklaces for special ceremonies and is the national plant of Tonga.

Garcinia sessilis (National Plant)



TUVALU

The giant swamp taro or **Pulaka** is a major food source in Tuvalu.

Cyrtosperma merkusii



VANUATU

Kava root is used to make a drink used in cultural and spiritual ceremonies.

Piper methysticum

