

Endangered & Rare Species in the Garden

Our garden is not just a collection of trees—it's a living archive of rare and threatened plant life. Many of the species documented in our phenology project are classified as vulnerable, endangered, or critically endangered on a local, regional, or global scale.

This page highlights these species, their conservation status, and their ecological significance.

Critically Endangered / Endangered Species

Scientific Name	Common Name	IUCN / Regional Status	Notes
<i>Erythrina eggersii</i>	Cock's Spur	Endangered	This rare species is native to the U.S. Virgin Islands. Fewer than 75 individual plants are estimated to remain in the wild.
<i>Buxus vahlii</i>	Vahl's boxwood	Endangered	The species is known from approximately four populations in Puerto Rico and St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands
<i>Solanum conocarpum</i>	Marron Bacora	Endangered	A rare Virgin Islands plant, native to St John, once believed lost to extinction, is the subject of a now has a draft recovery plan.
<i>libidibia monosperma</i>	Cobana Negra	Endangered	Listed as "Endangered" or "Threatened" in certain areas due to habitat destruction and overharvesting. Some populations are protected within reserves or arboretums, such as the dry forest of Guánica, Puerto Rico
<i>Swietenia humilis</i>	Honduras Mahogany	Endangered	Population decline due to overexploitation for timber. Severe habitat loss and poor natural regeneration
<i>Abutilon virginianum</i>	Indian Mallow	Endangered	Included on the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service 2012 list of native species in the U.S. Virgin Islands needing conservation attention


Phlebotaenia cowellii	Violet Tree	Near Threatened. Rare endemic (Caribbean)	Very limited range, highly localized.
Pereskia quisqueyana	Rosa de Bayahibe	Critically Endangered	National flower of the Dominican Republic; extremely restricted range.
Erythroxylum rotundifolium	Rat Wood	Locally Rare	Sparse wild populations in coastal scrublands.
Swietenia mahagoni	West Indies Mahogany	CITES Appendix II, Vulnerable	Overharvested historically; protected in many regions.
Bucida buceras	Black Olive / Gregory Wood	At Risk in some habitats	Common in some areas but declining in coastal zones.
Crescentia cujete	Calabash Tree	Culturally significant, regionally rare	Threatened by habitat conversion.
Krugiodendron ferreum	Black Ironwood	Rare (in many islands)	Extremely hard wood; slow- growing and hard to re- establish.
Guaiacum officinale	Lignum Vitae	Endangered (IUCN)	Overexploited for wood and traditional medicine.


Vulnerable or Locally Threatened Species


Scientific Name	Common Name	Status	Notes
<i>Thespesia populnea</i>	Portia Tree / Haiti-Haiti	At risk in native range	Coastal development threatens beach-dwelling trees.
<i>Annona muricata</i>	Soursop	Threatened by diseases	Populations threatened by fungal blight and reduced cultivation.
<i>Phoenix dactylifera</i>	Date Palm	Cultural/historic loss risk	Traditional varieties disappearing; not endangered in wild.
<i>Arenga pinnata</i>	Sugar Palm	Declining in parts of Asia	Threatened in native range, less so in cultivation.
<i>Malpighia infestissima</i>	Cow Itch Cherry	Locally rare	Often overlooked and removed as scrub.
<i>Caesalpinia pulcherrima</i>	Pride of Barbados	At risk in wild	Often naturalized, but wild populations are small and fragmented.

Why It Matters

 These trees represent regional genetic heritage and are part of the Caribbean's living biodiversity.

 They support rare insects, birds, and pollinators.

 Many are slow-growing and hard to regenerate once lost.

 Preserving them provides educational, ecological, and cultural value.

How the Garden Helps

- We observe and document phenological cycles to better understand and protect each species.
- Our work supports ArbNet accreditation, furthering the cause of conservation.
- Photos and geotags help future scientists and land managers track and preserve rare trees.