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Geographical range

Species of the Day: Mulanje Cedarwood

The **Mulanje Cedarwood**, *Widdringtonia whytei*, is listed as 'Endangered' on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™. The national tree of Malawi, this extremely valuable timber tree is endemic to Mount Mulanje, the second highest mountain in southern Africa.

The Mulanje Cedarwood has been heavily exploited in the past, with its wood used as timber and its sawdust distilled to obtain oil for local use as an insecticide. The tree's decline has been somewhat stemmed by a ban on felling, allowing exploitation only of dead trees, but illegal felling and killing of trees continues at an alarming rate.

The Mulanje Mountain Conservation Trust has been set up to provide long-term support for the research and conservation of biological diversity in the Mulanje Mountain Forest Reserve, and the sustainable utilisation of its natural resources. Not only is the Mulanje Cedarwood a national emblem in Malawi, but it is also of critical financial importance to this relatively poor country and, as such, its protection and sustainable use is a national priority.

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