

A PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATION INTO THE FLORA OF THE KEKANADURA FOREST RESERVE, MATARA, SRI LANKA

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Kekanadura Forest Reserve is the remnant of a vast and ancient tropical wet ever-green rain forest that lies about six miles N.E. of Matara. It covers an area of about 1,000 acres.

Although the forest had been extensively disturbed through human activities, few patches of typical rain-forest vegetation can still be seen. Investigations were carried out to identify the trees, shrubs and lianas in the arbitrarily selected plots by subjective assessment. A number of important species endemic to Sri Lanka were identified in the areas. The *Dipterocarpus* spp., *Canarium* sp., *Cyathocalyx* sp. were the most abundant among trees whereas plants like *Syzygium* were dominant in the shrub layer. In stratification studies, *Dipterocarpus* spp. were found to be the emergents whereas the canopy layer consisted of members belonging to families like Myristicaceae, Anacardiaceae and Myrtaceae. Species belonging to Rubiaceae, Euphorbiaceae and Myrtaceae were present in the shrub layer.

The presence of only *Dipteracarpus* spp. as emergents and the abundance of a large number of spalings of important timber trees and other endemic species in the undergrowth indicate selective logging in the forest.