

THE OCCURRENCE AND UTILISATION OF LEGUMINOUS  
SPECIES ENDEMIC TO SRI LANKA

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The occurrence of leguminous species endemic to Sri Lanka were recorded during a long-term research project conducted by the Institute of Fundamental Studies. The data initially collected from literature surveys and questionnaires was verified during fields visits which included interviews with local people, visual observations and specimen collections.

The results so far obtained when mapped on a 10 x 10 km grid of the Island shows that the distribution of endemic species is highly limited. Non-adaptability to environmental situations, lack of utilisation and the availability of substitutes may be the major reasons for this restricted distribution.

Unlike the other leguminous species the endemics appear to be used rarely for medicine, fodder and green-manure. Of the 10 species so far studied, 7 were trees, but only Pericopsis mooniana (Nedun in Sinhala) is used as timber. While most of the other species were uncommon to people, it was noticed there were three other species which have value as utilisable timber.

Further basic studies such as seed germination, growth, nodulation, nitrogen fixation etc., are required prior to the popularisation of these endemic leguminous species.