

## VEGETATION COVER OF THE UDA WALAWE NATIONAL PARK

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The vegetation cover types of the Uda Walawe National Park were studied using extensive reconnaissance surveys, aerial photographic interpretation and detailed plot analyses.

The vegetation cover of the Park could be tentatively divided into seven types:

1. Relatively undisturbed tall riverine or gallery forest dominated by Terminalia arjuna (Kumbuk), and the endemic Hopea cordifolia (Mendora).
2. Somewhat degraded seasonally dry forest cover with Schleichera oleosa (Kon) and Chloroxylon swietenia (Satin) as major canopy trees and Drypetes sepiaria (Wira) and Diospyros ovalifolia (Kunumella), as understorey trees.
3. Vast stretches of a Parkland like secondary vegetation with scattered trees of Chloroxylon swietenia (Satin), Stereospermum personatum (Lunumidella) and Cassia fistula, in a tall grass cover of mainly Panicum maximum (Guinea) and Imperata cylindrica (Illuk).
4. A distinctive floristic community on rock outcrops with deciduous woody species like Sterculia foetida, Sterculia urens, and the xerophytic succulent Euphorbia antiquorum.
5. The remnants of a Manilkara hexandra (Palu) forest with Feronia Limonia (Divul) and Bauhinia racemosa (Maila) was recognised on patches of poorly drained clayey soils (low humid gleys).
6. A low stature scrub vegetation dominated by Grewia tiliaefolia (Damaniya) with a thick impenetrable undergrowth of Phyllanthus polyphyllus (Kuretiya) and Fleuggea Leucopyrus (Katupila). This probably represents a secondary successional phase on abandoned chena lands.
7. A fire savanna occurs in the north western area of the park. The common tree species here were Terminalia chebula (Aralua) Terminalia bellerica (Bulu) and Phyllanthus emblica (Nelli).

A total of 287 species of Angiosperms and Pteridophytes were collected and identified during our survey of the Uda Walawe National Park.

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