

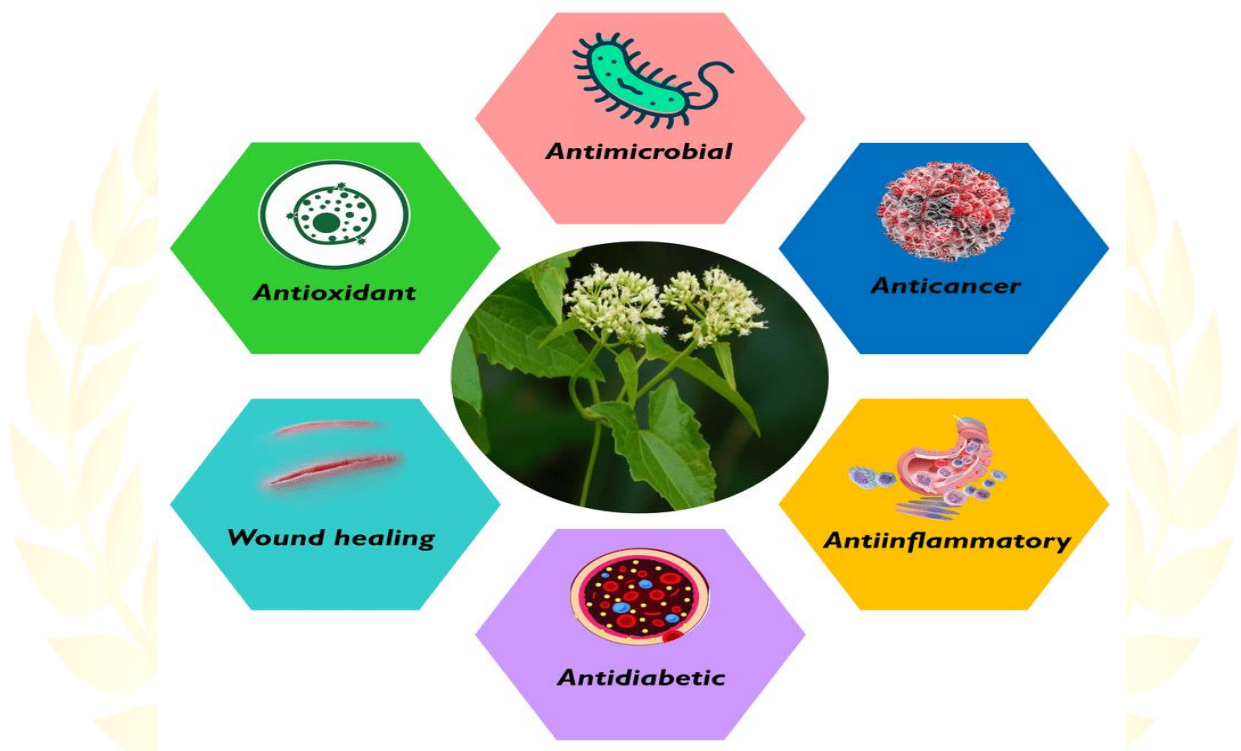


SPECIES OF THE DAY

The weed, **Mikania micrantha**, is spreading quite fast in the Bhadra Tiger Reserve.

About Mikania micrantha

- It is commonly known as "mile-a-minute" weed.
- It is a fast-growing, invasive plant species belonging to the Asteraceae family.
- Native to Central and South America, it has spread to various tropical and subtropical regions worldwide.



Characteristics

- It is a **perennial, herbaceous climber that can grow up to 25 meters in length.**
- Its rapid growth allows it to cover large areas within a short period.
- The plant has heart-shaped leaves and clusters of small, white flowers.
- These flowers produce large numbers of seeds that are easily dispersed, contributing to its invasive nature.
- The plant secretes chemicals that inhibit the growth and germination of surrounding plants. **This allelopathic property allows it to dominate ecosystems and disrupt local vegetation.**



- It was introduced to regions like India during World War II to camouflage airfields.
- The plant thrives in disturbed areas, secondary rainforests, riverbanks, and open ground.
- It prefers tropical climates with ample sunlight and fertile, well-drained soils.

Uses

- *Mikania micrantha* has some reported medicinal uses.
- In places like Assam, Mizoram, and Bangladesh, the plant is used to treat insect bites, cuts, skin irritations, and even stomach-aches. The plant has antimicrobial effects.

About Bhadra Tiger Reserve

- It is located in the Western Ghats of Karnataka, spreading over Chikmagalur and Shimoga districts.
- The habitat is well drained by the river Bhadra and its tributaries.
- The sanctuary is surrounded by Mullayanagiri, Hebbegiri, Gangegiri and Bababudangiri hills.
- Hebbe Falls are in the eastern part of the sanctuary.
- Tributaries of the Bhadra river flow west through the sanctuary.
- Bhadravathi, Tarikere and Birur are cities nearby.

Flora

- The flora of the reserve comprises of:
 - Southern moist mixed deciduous Forests
 - Southern dry mixed deciduous Forests.
 - Sholas

Fauna

- It is home to about 40 species of large mammals, of which most are endangered.
- Tiger, Leopard, Leopard cat, Dhool, Indian Civet, ungulates like Gaur, Sambar and Barking Deer are common.
- The habitat has a good population of elephants and is also an Elephant Reserve.

Source: <https://www.deccanherald.com/india/karnataka/alarm-in-bhadra-tiger-reserve-as-weed-runs-rampant-3181949>