Brief Guide to the
Rare Plants of Antigua and Barbuda
Requiring Protection

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Introduction

This illustrated guide accompanies the Red List of Vascular Plants of Antigua and Barbuda (See reference below). This small guide is intended to help ordinary people to recognise some of our rare and threatened plants in our countryside. The photographs were taken in Antigua and Barbuda by the authors.

The threats facing our countryside and our plants are numerous – free-roaming goats, man-made fires, indiscriminate “cleaning” of the land and ghaut-sand mining are probably the most harmful activities causing the loss of hundreds of acres of our countryside every year.

It is important to understand that the destruction of our countryside is occurring at an unprecedented rate. This is due to several reasons;

- The introduction of the alien invasive fever grass in the last century and the practise of burning it has destroyed over an estimated 1000 acres of our countryside in Body Ponds alone.
- The recent (last 50 years or so) practise of allowing large numbers of goats to roam freely in the countryside has caused a similar loss of environment
- In recent years enormous bulldozers and excavators have been introduced into the country in large numbers – so called “cleaning” of the land using these machines and the lack of protected areas is also resulting on our countryside being turned into a patchwork.

This brief guide contains illustrations of some of the more readily recognisable species of greatest concern, which hopefully will in due course be protected under the law. Good photographic material is not available for all of the species contained in the reference document below as yet, so some species are omitted, but will be included in a future update.

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References


Cover photograph: Ouratia guildingii
Native Ferns

All ferns and their environments (many live in damp, shady areas, ghauts and also brackish marshy areas) are under threat and must be protected. Those illustrated below are examples of the 50 or so species.

"Flowering" fern (*Anemia hirta*)

Snake Fern (*Microgramma lycopodioides*)

Treemoss bristlefern (*Trichomanes krausii*)

Digit Fern (*Doryopteris pedata*)

Ribbon Fern (*Neurodium lanceolatum*)

Mangrove Fern (*Acrostichum danaeifolium*)
Native Orchids

All orchids are under threat and must be protected. Those illustrated below are examples of the 18 native species which must be protected.

Yellow Dancing Lady (*Tolumnia urophylla*)

Star orchid (*Epidendrum anceps*)

Eyelash orchid (*Epidendrum ciliare*)

Widelip orchid (*Liparis nervosa*)

Wallflower Orchid (*Tetramica elegans*)

Winged Bog Orchid (*Habenaria alata*)
Native Palm Trees
Our 5 native palms are under threat and must be protected. The extraordinarily spiny macaw and the graceful palmetto are very rare.

Macaw Palm (*Acrocomia aculeata*)

Pimetta (*Leucothrinax morrisii*)

Palmetto (*Coccothrinax barbadensis*)

Native Bromeliads
Bromeliads, epiphytic and terrestrial, are under threat and must be protected. Below is a sample of our 10 native species.

Giant airplant (*Tillandsia utriculata*)

Old man's beard (*Tillandsia usneoides*)

Vriesia guadeloupensis
Mangroves

Our mangroves are being destroyed at an alarming rate. At the current rate of loss (around 6% pa), they will be gone within 10 years or so. We have 5 species, red, white, 2 black species and button mangrove.
Cacti

All cacti are under threat and must be protected. Those illustrated below are examples of 14 native species.

*Mammillaria nivosa*

*Rhipsalis baccifera*

*Turks Cap Cactus (Melocactus intortus)*

*Tree Opuntia (Opuntia rubescens)*

*Acanthocereus tetragonus*

*Duldul (Pilosocereus royenii)*
Trees and Shrubs

Our forests and native trees and shrubs are being destroyed at an unprecedented rate. This list is taken from a list of 300 native trees and shrubs. Many more species that are described here are becoming increasingly rare.

Blackberry (*Catesbaea melanocarpa*)

Lignum Vitae (*Guaiacum officinale*)

Ouratea guildingii

Black Warri (*Caesalpinia ciliata*)

Piper dilatatum

Red Cedar (*Cedrela odorata*)
W.I. Mahogany (*Swietenia mahagoni*)

Milky Bush (*Tabernaemontana citrifolia*)

Wild mahot (*Sterculia caribaea*)

Red birch (*Myrcianthes fragrans*)

Spineless Wattle (*Acacia muricata*)

Ironwood (*Ziziphus reticulata*)
Stinging Cherry (*Malpighia linearis*)

Wild Cherry (*Malpighia martinicensis*)

*Zanthoxylum punctatum*

*Ardisia obovata*

*Antirhea acutata*

*Brunfelsia americana*
Native Herbaceous Plants

Many native herbs are under threat and must be protected. Even our national flower, Agave karato is threatened by indiscriminate clearing.

*Furcraea tuberosa*

*Smilax guianensis*

*Century Plant (Agave karatto)*

*Myrtle-leafed Peperomia (Peperomia myrtifolia)*

*Anthurium grandifolium*

*Pilea nummulariifolia*