

The International Symposium on Aquatic Flora: Culture, Innovation & Sustainability

The International Symposium on Aquatic Flora: Culture, Innovation & Sustainability was held on 2–4 October 2026 at the Malabar Botanical Garden and Institute for Plant Sciences, Kozhikode, Kerala. The symposium brought together researchers, conservationists, educators, and practitioners to share knowledge and experiences on aquatic flora, biodiversity, conservation, sustainable use, and innovative approaches to protecting freshwater ecosystems.

I represented Zoo Outreach Organisation (Zooreach), participated in the symposium, and presented a talk titled “Community-Based Monitoring and Conservation of the Malabar River-lily (*Crinum malabaricum* Lekhak & S.R. Yadav) in Seasonal Lateritic Streams of Kerala, India.” The presentation focused on this highly restricted endemic freshwater plant, recorded from only six locations in Kerala. It highlighted annual monitoring undertaken at its type locality, Periyar, since 2022 through a collaboration between the IUCN SSC Freshwater Plant Specialist Group, Zoo Outreach Organisation, and Government College Kasaragod. Monitoring data from Periyar, including records from 2017 and 2022–2025, indicated that the population remains fairly stable at this location, although it continues to face threats such as stream-bed clearing, pollution, flower collection for local festivals, and pesticide runoff. The presentation emphasized the need to extend monitoring to other sites where the population status remains unknown, noting that the population is suspected to be declining at two locations, and highlighting ongoing threats such as rubber plantations, laterite mining and construction. It also highlighted collaborations with local birding groups and colleges, which have generated interest and opportunities for greater community participation, awareness, and conservation of *Crinum malabaricum*.



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