New pink-flowering shrub species 'Osbeckia assamensis' discovered in Assam's Manas National Park

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News

A new flowering plant species, 'Osbeckia assamensis', has been found in the grasslands of Manas National Park, Assam. The paper by researchers Barnali Das and Namita Nath was published in the journal 'Phytotaxa' on 22 Oct 2026, and Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma announced it on 26 Oct. It was found during field surveys in 2021–2025; the first specimen was collected on 8 Oct 2022. It is a perennial shrub (2–2.5 m) of the family Melastomataceae, with pink flowers (3–3.5 cm), 30–35 per cluster, flowering from September to February.

Key facts

Species	Osbeckia assamensis – family Melastomataceae
Location	Grasslands of Manas National Park, Assam
Study	Barnali Das, Namita Nath; 'Phytotaxa', 22 Oct 2026
Features	Perennial shrub, 2–2.5 m; pink flowers 3–3.5 cm; 30–35 per cluster
Difference	Differs from the related O. nayarii in stem, leaves, flower arrangement, hairy calyx margins and seed size

Flowering / status	Sept–Feb; assessed 'Data Deficient' under IUCN criteria

Background

- Manas National Park lies in the Himalayan foothills of Assam. It became a UNESCO natural World Heritage Site in 1985 and was on the 'In Danger' list from 1992 to 2011. In 1973 it was among the first tiger reserves under Project Tiger.
- Geography: the park is named after the Manas River, a major tributary of the Brahmaputra, and borders Bhutan's Royal Manas National Park to the north.
- Wildlife: tiger, greater one-horned rhino, swamp deer, the pygmy hog (the world's smallest wild pig), Bengal florican, Asian elephant and gaur.
- Botany: Melastomataceae is one of the ten largest families of flowering plants (order Myrtales). 'Kaya' (Memecylon umbellatum) of the same family grows in South India and Sri Lanka; its leaves contain a yellow dye.

Tamil Nadu link: the Southern Regional Centre (Southern Circle, 1955) of the Botanical Survey of India (BSI) is at Coimbatore; the old 'Madras Herbarium' was moved from Chennai to Coimbatore and handed over to it. 'Kaya' (Memecylon umbellatum), a member of Melastomataceae, also grows in Tamil Nadu.

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