



Exotic trees eating up Western Ghat's grasslands

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Exotic trees eating up Western Ghat's grasslands-But shola forests have remained "relatively unchanged"

- The new year heralds bad news for the high-altitude grasslands of the Western Ghats.
- Over four decades, the country lost almost one-fourth of these grasslands and exotic invasive trees are primarily to blame, find scientists.
- Though grassland afforestation using pine, acacia and eucalyptus ceased in 1996, the exotics still invade these ecosystems, confirms a study published in the international journal Biological Conservation.
- Most of this loss occurred on the mountain tops of the Nilgiri, Palani and Anamalai hill ranges, which comprise more than half of the Ghat's shola-grassland ecosystems, primarily due to the expansion of exotic trees (pine, acacia and eucalyptus).
- The Anamalai-Munnar areas have also remained stable during this time.

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