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### Summary

VallikkattuKavu of Kozhikkode district occupying 25 acres of land is one of the important sacred groves in Kerala with unique vegetation and species composition. The main deity of the kavu is goddess Durga. Topographically this midland area falls along the side of a laterite hillock. Thick vegetation with *Myristica* groove is the characteristic feature of this sacred grove. This sacred grove is a source of a perennial stream which provides water for the surrounding community. The sacred grove is the only known locality of *Myristicafatua* var. *magnifica* in north of Kollam and Thiruvananthapuram districts of Kerala. VallikkattuKavu represents one of healthy and ecologically sound sacred grove in entire Kerala.

During the study, 276 species of vascular plants belonging to 232 genera under 78 families and two sub families were recorded from the area, which is about 30 per cent of the flora recorded in the Flora of Calicut by KS Manilal and Sivarajan. Dicotyledons have 229 species belonging to 196 genera under 66 families and 2 sub families. Monocotyledons are represented by 45 species in 34 genera under 10 families. Gymnosperm is represented with 2 families and 2 species. Fabaceae with 25 species in 22 genera is the largest family in the area. Twenty nine dicot families, 5 monocot families and 2 gymnosperm families are represented with only single species. The genera *Cyperus* has maximum number of species with six. Herbs are the

dominating habit group with 95 taxa followed by 69 climbers, 69 trees and 51 shrubs. Among the 285 taxa, 129 are medicinal plants. The area is also rich in endemic and threatened species. Among the 285 species, 51 are endemic to India. Among the 51 endemics, 47 are endemic to peninsular India including 35 Western Ghats endemics. In the sacred grove Rubiaceae is the dominant family with respect to endemism with 5 endemics. It is important that, 21 species are endemic to southern Western Ghats. Among the 51 endemics, 6 species are under various threat categories IUCN. Among these, *Dioscorea wightii* Hook.f. belongs to Critically Endangered category. Rest of them are coming under Vulnerable category. Generally forest areas are the centre of medicinal, endemic and threatened species, high rate of endemic and threatened flora in a small area, especially outside forests demonstrate its importance with respect to conservation, ecological and sociological security of local community in the area.