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Geographical range

Species of the Day: Café Marron

Café Marron – the local name for ‘Wild Coffee’ – *Ramosmania rodriguesii*, is a shrubby relative of the coffee plant found only on the Indian Ocean Island of Rodrigues. It is classified as ‘Critically Endangered’ on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™, being known only from a single plant in the wild which was discovered when the species was thought to be extinct.

The Island of Rodrigues has suffered rapid and massive deforestation due to its small size and terrain suited to agricultural use. Less than 1% of the original native habitats currently exist, making habitat destruction the overwhelming main cause of decline of Café Marron. While successful propagation saved the species from imminent extinction, the remaining wild plant still requires protection from those who believe it to have medicinal properties.

Café Marron has been successfully propagated at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, and several plants returned to Rodrigues island where some were re-introduced in the Grande Montagne Nature Reserve as the first step towards reinstating a viable wild population. It is cultivated in several other places.

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