A SURVEY ON DIVERSITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF WEED SPECIES IN TEA ESTATES IN BALANGODA REGION.

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By
POLHENA JAYASINGHA THANTHRIGE PAVITHRA LAKSHAN THANTHRIGE

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Uva Wellassa University of Sri Lanka

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ABSTRACT

A survey was conducted to study the diversity and distribution of weeds in tea fields of Maddekanda Tea Estate, Balangoda during the months of November and December, 2018. The aim was to identify the most common and prevalent weeds associated with Tea and their abundances under different elevation and age categories of tea. The survey covered young, mature and pruned tea fields located at both low and high elevations. Weed sample were obtained from 10 randomly selected spots of each of the above fields using a quadrat sized 0.5m×0.5m. Weeds present within each quadrat were identified and counted by species and the frequency, density, abundance and diversity index for each species were calculated. A total of 52 different weed species belonged to 23 families, which comprised 38 annuals and 14 perennials and; 36 broadleaved weeds, 14 grasses and 2 sedges, were identified. *Ageratum conyzoides* (Hulanthala) was found to be the most abundant. Other prominent species were *Borreria latifolia, Eleutheranthera ruderalis, Mikania scandens.* Annuals were more dominant than perennials, and weeds were more abundant at lower elevation compared to the higher elevation of the estate.

Key words: Weed Survey in tea at Balangoda, Weed species diversity, Diversity Index.