Rhododendron

Rhododendron is a large genus of **flowering plants and is found mainly in Eastern Himalayas, Western Himalayas and Nilgiris.** Some plants of Rhododendron are **evergreen** and some are **deciduous** in nature.

- The species is found in varied habitats from subtropical forest to alpine shrubs, rhododendrons range from **dwarf shrubs to large trees.**
- The cold, moist slopes and deep valleys of the eastern Himalayas form a conducive habitat for the luxuriant growth of Rhododendron species and rich diversity in North Eastern States.
- The species has been designated as the **State tree of Uttarakhand** and its blooming in the Garhwal Himalayas is celebrated as ‘**Phool Sankranti**’, a festival of flowers.
- The studies on the flowering cycle have revealed that they are prominent indicators of climate change.
- In high altitude areas of Arunachal Pradesh rhododendrons are routinely cut for firewood by local people, forest fires in the dry seasons in Manipur and Nagaland were threatening the survival of many species.