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Geographical range

Species of the Day: Pau Brasil

The **Pau Brasil**, *Caesalpinia echinata*, is listed as 'Endangered' on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™. Famous as the species which gave the country of Brazil its name, the remaining native stands are restricted to the Brazilian states of Pernambuco, Bahia, Espírito Santo and Rio de Janeiro.

In the past, the Pau Brasil was an extremely important source of red dye, a trade that began in the 1500s. The use of synthetic dyes only became widespread in the late 19th century, by which time the natural stands of Brazil's national tree had been all but destroyed. Today, the main threat facing this species is its exportation for the manufacture of bows for stringed instruments.

This flagship species is included on the official list of threatened Brazilian plants, and various laws restrict its export. As part of the Global Trees Campaign, Fauna & Flora International and BGCI have worked to support education and public awareness programmes, and have also collaborated with local partners to carry out further research into the species' distribution and conservation requirements.

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