



Successful effort by the four teams: After rescuing of 1320 seedlings of native shrub and tree species from the road sides of the Knuckles Forest Reserve, 10<sup>th</sup> of September 2017.

# SAVING THE NEXT GENERATION

## PHASE 1

### Collection of Native Plant Seedlings for Restoration of Degraded Sites at the Knuckles Forest Reserve

**T**he Knuckles Forest Reserve, the Peak Wilderness Protected Area and the Horton Plains National Park was declared as part of the Central Highlands World Heritage in 2010 by the UNESCO. The region includes the largest and least disturbed remaining areas of the submontane and montane rainforests of Sri Lanka, with high endemism and biodiversity and provides habitats for many threatened plant and animal species. In order to conserve the much degraded submontane forests in the Knuckles Forest Reserve, the Botanical Society of the University of Peradeniya (BOTSOC) joined hands with the Forest Department, Matale and Noritake Lanka Porcelain (Pvt.) Ltd. to initiate the first phase of a restoration project on the 10<sup>th</sup> of September 2017 at the Knuckles Forest Reserve. Thirty nine members of the Botanical Society of the University of Peradeniya, 15 officials from the Noritake

Lanka Porcelain (Pvt.) Ltd., four officials from the Forest Department, Matale and villagers from adjacent villages participated in this event. At the onset of this activity, the group was educated on the identification of relevant seedlings and methods to extract them with minimal damage. The collection of seedlings of native tree/shrub species was done mainly along the roadsides, which are prone to be damaged during roadside maintenance. One thousand three hundred and twenty (1320) seedlings of native tree/shrub species were rescued with the active participation of twelve groups. All the collected seedlings were planted at the Forest Department nursery at Matale. They are being maintained by the officials attached to the Forest Department until transplantation takes place in December 2017.



Awareness on seedling collection from roadsides of the Knuckles Forest Reserve



Team members rescuing seedlings of native shrubs and trees from the roadside



Sorting the seedlings according to the species



Members of the Botanical Society with some of their seedling collection



Wrap up: Discussing the importance and the next phases of the restoration program.



Potted seedlings of native plant species in the nursery at the Forest Department, Matale.