



Department of Botany
Faculty of Science / University of Peradeniya



Prof. Thilanka Gunaratne

B.Sc. (Perad.), Ph.D. (Aberdeen, UK)

Professor in Botany

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About Me

I have been serving the Department of Botany, University of Peradeniya as an ecologist for the past 15 years.

Vision Statement

To create innovative platforms that advance environmental education, research, and outreach, fostering environmental conservation for a regenerative earth.

Tropical Ecology # Ecological Restoration # Biodiversity Conservation # Ecotourism # Science Education # Sustainable Development

Higher Education Qualifications

🎓 **PhD**

University of Aberdeen
United Kingdom
(2007)

🎓 **BSc**

University of Peradeniya
Sri Lanka
(2002)

Awards, Scholarships, Memberships & Fellowships



SUSRED Award 2023 awarded by National Science Foundation of Sri Lanka for PhD supervision (Co-supervisor)



Research Excellence Award 2020 awarded by the Faculty of Science, UoP



Excellence in Teaching Award 2018/2019 awarded by the Faculty of Science, UoP



President's Award for Scientific Publications, National Research Council, Sri Lanka 2014



President's Award for Scientific Publications, National Research Council, Sri Lanka 2011



Merit Award for Scientific Publications, National Research Council, Sri Lanka - 2010



PhD studentship, EU-Asia Link Program – 2003 to 2006



University Scholarship for Academic Excellence, University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka – 2002



Mahapola Higher Education (Merit) Scholarship, Govt. of Sri Lanka – 1998 to 2002

Positions Held

-  Team Leader of Outreach Program 'Regreen Hantana: Restoration of Forests on Degraded Lands' (Collaborative Project with the Forest Department, Commercial Bank, CBL Global Foods and Local Community)- (2022 to date)
-  Program Coordinator of Outreach Program 'Save the Next Generation: Reconnecting Lower Montane Forests in Knuckles Conservation Forest, Sri Lanka' (Collaborative project with the Forest Department, Noritake Lanka Porcelain Pvt. Ltd and Local Community)- (2017 to date)
-  Department Representative, Faculty Web Committee, UoP- (2022 to date)
-  Converner Cluster 3 (Botany, Molecular Biology and Bioechnology and Zoology), Self Evaluation Report, Faculty of Science, UoP- (2022 2023)
-  Departmental Coordinator, Centre for Distance and Continuing Education, UoP- (2018 to 2023)
-  Member, Board of Study in Plant Sciences, Postgraduate Institute of Science, UoP- (2017 to 2023)
-  Senior Treasurer, Peradeniya University Botanical Society- (March 2019 to July 2022)
-  Chairperson, Faculty Environmental Management Committee- (2016 to 2021)
-  Departmental Coordinator for the Environmental Science (Special) Degree Programme- (January 2016 to 2021)
-  Faculty Representative, Center for Environmental Studies, University of Peradeniya- (2012 to 2021)
-  Departmental Coordinator, Science Education- (October 2015 to September 2019)
-  Secretary, Board of Study in Environmental Science, Postgraduate Institute of Science- (2012 - 2013)
-  Senior Student Counselor, Faculty of Science, University of Peradeniya- (2011 - 2013)

My Teachings

-  BL1002: Basic Biology (Undergraduate course)
-  BL117: Biotic Interactions (Undergraduate Course)
-  BL1192: Tropical Ecosystems (Undergraduate course)
-  BT310: Ecosystems of Sri Lanka: Their Conservation and Management (Undergraduate Course)
-  BT409: Dynamic Plant Ecology (Undergraduate Course)
-  ENM516: Promotion of Ecotourism (M.Sc. in Biodiversity, Ecotourism and Environmental Management)
-  SC0001: Tropical Biodiversity and Conservation
-  SE518: Plant and Animal Evolution and Interaction (M.Sc. in Science Education)
-  SE519: Environmental Science (M.Sc. in Science Education)

Research Interests (Research Fields/ Projects)

Tropical Ecology: Role of disturbances (invasive species, anthropogenic disturbances) and biotic interactions in maintaining tropical biodiversity

Restoration Ecology: Factors limiting natural regeneration in former forested sites, assisting forest recovery on degraded lands with community involvement, monitoring and evaluation of restoration

Biodiversity Conservation and Management: Conservation of biodiversity of forest fragments, promotion of ecotourism as a tool to conserve biodiversity and sustainable development in Sri Lanka

Science Education: Role of field-based teaching/ activity-based teaching in environment-related subjects in Sri Lankan education system

Ongoing Research and Projects



Population structure and diversity of *Osbeckia lanata* Alston. (Endemic, Endangered) wild populations in Sri Lanka

2019 to date: A collaborative project with H.A.C. K. Ariyaratne (Department of Botany, UoP), A. Attanayake (Royal Botanical Gardens, Peradeniya) M.Phil Research student: Ms. E.H. Chinthani M. Eeriyawala



Diversity and Distribution of Mangroves in Rekawa Lagoon, Sri Lanka using GIS and Remote Sensing Approach

2020 to date: A collaborative project with Dr. J. Gunatillake M.Sc. research project of Ms. Jayani Gunawardhane (M.Sc. degree program in GIS and Remote Sensing)



Comparison of dragonfly diversity in two fragmented lowland evergreen forest patches in Sri Lanka

2020 to date M.Sc. research project of Ms. Udari Peiris (MSc. degree program in Biodiversity, Ecotourism and Environment Management)



Promotion of ecotourism in Mannar, Sri Lanka

2020 to date M.Sc. research project of Ms. Anushka Senevirathne (M.Sc. in Biodiversity, Ecotourism and Environment Management)



Urban bird diversity in selected areas in Colombo District

2020 to date M.Sc. research project of Ms. Kasuni Perera (M.Sc. in Biodiversity, Ecotourism and Environment Management)



Effects of conversion to organic agriculture on biodiversity

2023 to date: A collaborative project with Prof. S.H. Boyagoda (Department of Zoology, UoP), H.S.M.P. Madawala (Department of Botany, UoP), Dr. B. S. Nanayakkara (Department of Botany, UoP) and Dr. H.T.K. Abeyesundara (Department of Statistics and Computer Science, UoP) M.Phil Research student: Ms. M.V. N. Premachandra

Key Publications



Forest Ecology and Management - (2014)

Overcoming ecological barriers to tropical lower montane forest succession on anthropogenic grasslands: Synthesis and future prospects



Journal of Applied Ecology - (2010)

Barriers to tree seedling emergence on human-induced grasslands in Sri Lanka.

Conferences



ATBC Asia Pacific Conference 2019: Bridging the Elements of Biodiversity Conservation

HELD AT : MAS Athena, Thulhiriya, Sri Lanka - (10th to 13th September 2019)

TOPIC : *Seed availability for tree regeneration on degraded grasslands adjacent to lower montane forest fragments*



IUFRO-ICFRE International Symposium on Intersectoral Cooperation for Resilient Landscapes 2023

HELD AT : Dehradun, India - (29th to 30th March 2023)

TOPIC : *Restoration success: Natural regeneration, C stock and bird diversity in a restored pine stand in Hantana, Sri Lanka*

My Publications

Please goto the website.

<https://sci.pdn.ac.lk/botany/staff/Thilanka-Gunaratne>