

SIKKIM

State Tree: Hiun–pate Gurans

Botanical Name: *Rhododendron niveum* Hook.f.

Family: Ericaceae

Common Names: Rhododendron (English); Burans (Kumaoni); Gurans (Nepali).

Etymology: The generic epithet is derived from Greek “**rhodon**” means rose and “**dendron**” means tree. The specific epithet is derived from Latin “**niveus**” meaning snowy or snow–white, attributes to colour of leaves lower surface.



Rhododendron niveum Hook.f.

Description: It is one of the beautiful Rhododendrons that can easily be distinguished from other species growing in Sikkim by its smoky blue or purple–mauve flowers and snow–white under surface of

leaves which turn grey on ageing. Shrub to small trees, 2 – 5 m high, generally branched at base. Stems cracked and fissured by flakes. Leaves oblong–lanceolate, 10 – 25 × 4 – 5 cm, shining green above, tomentose, snow–white below, turning silvery grey on maturity. Inflorescence is large, globose, 15 – 20 cm. Flowers in clusters of 15 – 20; corolla tubular–campanulate, smoky blue to purple–mauve.

Flowering & Fruiting: The plants are in full bloom in April; ripe fruits can be seen up to December.

Range of Distribution: It is native to Northeast India, Bhutan and southern Tibet.

Economic Importance: The plants are having aesthetic value and are being cultivated in gardens through Europe and America. It is also used in horticulture for grafting and hybridization. Socio-economic uses are not recorded.

Traditional Use: Not known.

Medicinal Uses: Not known.

Propagation: Seed germination, cuttings and in-vitro methods.

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