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Abstract

Compilation of alien flora from phytogeographically distinct regions is of immediate relevance not only for better understanding the patterns of plant invasion but also for explicating the processes promoting invasion at local, regional or global scales. Despite being at higher risk of invasion by plants because of its European colonial past, south Asia has received very little attention in respect of characterization of its alien flora. This paucity of baseline data necessitated compilation of the first catalogue of alien flora from the Kashmir Himalaya—a phytogeographically distinct south Asian region nestled in the northwestern folds of Himalayan biodiversity hotspot. Total alien flora of the region is represented by 571 plant species, belonging to 352 genera and 104 families. It constitutes a relatively higher (29%) proportion of the total flora of the region. Families with largest number of alien representatives are Poaceae (60 species), Asteraceae (54 species), and Brassicaceae (30 species). However, families such as Amaranthaceae (83%) and Chenopodiaceae (71%) show higher percentage of aliens relative to their total number of plant species in the region. Most of the alien plant species (38%) trace their origin to Europe, followed by Asia (27%) and Africa (15%). Present study also reports, for the first time, occurrence of seven plant species in this region. Each alien plant species is provided with information on the origin, habit, mode/purpose of introduction, current invasion status, altitudinal range and the primary published source.

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