

Wrights Gardenia, ONE OF THE MOST BEAUTIFUL ENDEMIC TREE THAT GROWS ONLY IN SEYCHELLES

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Wrights Gardenia (*Rothmannia annae* or *Bwa sitron* in creole) is a plant that grows only in Seychelles (endemic in biological parlance) and is found in its natural state only on Aride Island. The sweet scented plant was named after Edward Percival Wright who visited Seychelles in the 19th century.

Often agreed that the flower is probably one of the most beautiful of the endemic trees of our small island.

The species is critically endangered and protecting it is an important part of the Island Conservation Society's (ICS) work.

To reduce the risk of extinction, other small populations of Wrights Gardenia have been established on Frégate Island and the Barabons Biodiversity Centre on Mahé.

The flower used to grow on granite islands, but disappeared after human settlement from 1609, due to soil erosion.

It is no doubt that Wrights Gardenia is one of the most remarkable flowers, ever grown

in Seychelles. Its shrub that grows up to four meters in height -bears trumpet-shaped white flowers with magenta spots that appear 10 days after heavy rain. It has a distinguished fragrant smell which attracts pollinators and help the plant in bearing fruits.

The Wrights Gardenia was reintroduced to Mahe (in 1970), Praslin (1997), Félicité (2000), and Silhouette with mixed success. In 2012, The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) upgraded its conservation status to Critically Endangered.

FACTS ABOUT WRIGHTS GARDENIA?

- The Creole name *Bwa Sitron* means 'lemon tree'. The fruits are green, shiny, and lemon-shaped but are inedible.

- The flower has been featured in paintings, stamps, and the national currency (25 rupees note).



A PAINTING OF THE BEAUTIFUL 'BWA SITRON'