

## CORRESPONDENCE

era<sup>4</sup>. Of 520 species, 498 belong to angiosperms or flowering plants (61 families and 234 genera), 18 pteridophytes or fern species and 4 gymnosperms or conifers. The VOF harbours 472 species of herbs, 41 species of shrubs and 8 species of trees. Asteraceae is the most dominant family (29 genera, 60 species) in the VOF, followed by Rosaceae (13 genera, 33 species), Ranunculaceae (13 genera, 33 species) and Orchidaceae (15 genera, 24 species). Gymnosperms have three families, viz. Cupressaceae, Pinaceae, and Taxaceae. I have also recorded 60 new species for the first time from the VOF, of which 4 species, viz. *Saussurea atkinsonii*, *Duthiea bromoides*, *Lycopodium selago*, and *Salix calyculata* have been recorded from Uttarakhand Himalaya<sup>5</sup>. Of the 520 species of vascular plants in the VOF, 16 species are endemic to Indian Himalaya and 31 species are of rare and endangered

categories<sup>4</sup>. Of the 7 major protected areas across the Indian Himalaya, the VOF possesses highest number of threatened medicinal plant species<sup>6</sup>.

To assess VOF as a World Heritage Site, three major criteria were taken into account by the IUCN to place before the World Heritage Committee. These criteria were: (i) exceptional natural beauty, (ii) population of rare, endangered and high altitude flora and fauna, and (iii) status of conservation and management. VOF fulfilled all the required conditions laid by the IUCN. I was one of the independent reviewers and evaluators as nominated by the IUCN to assess the VOF. Fortunately, I had collected sufficient data on all these aspects; apart from this, I have a website on the VOF <http://www.geocities.com/cpkala> and 2 dozens of publications exclusively on the various aspects of the VOF that helped in strengthening the VOF nomination.

1. Kala, C. P., *The Valley of Flowers: Myth and Reality*, International Book Distributors, Dehradun, 2004.
2. Smythe, F. S., *The Valley of Flowers*, Natraj Publishers, 1938.
3. Ghildiyal, B. N., *J. Bombay Nat. Hist. Soc.*, 1957, **54**, 365–368.
4. Kala, C. P., *Int. J. Biodiversity Sci. Manage.*, 2005, **1**, 25–32.
5. Kala, C. P., Ph D thesis, Forest Research Institute, Dehradun, 1998.
6. Kala, C. P., *Conserv. Biol.*, 2005, **19**, 368–378.

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## Antidiabetic effect of *Annona squamosa* (L.)

Gupta *et al.*<sup>1</sup> state that there have been no previous publications on the antidiabetic activity of the plant *Annona squamosa*. A similar but not an identical study on the same plant, carried out in our laboratory was published as: (a) Antidiabetic activity ... diabetic rats. *J. Ethnopharmacol.*, 2004, **91**, 171–175. (b) Oral antidiabetic activity ... in NIDDM rats. *Pharm. Biol.*, 2004, **42**, 30–35.

1. Gupta, R. K., Kesari, A. N., Watal, G., Murthy, P. S., Ramesh Chandra Maithal, K. and Tandon, V., *Curr. Sci.*, 2005, **88**, 1244.

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### Response:

We started animal testing in 2000 in our laboratory for scientific explanation of leaves extract of *Annona squamosa* and applied for patent in 2002 for protecting the work. The Indian patent (Patent no. 21/DEL/2003) and international patent (Patent no. PCT/IN03/0228) were filed in 2003 by the Department of Science and Technology, New Delhi. This was published in *Chemical Abstracts* in 2004 (63-*Pharmaceuticals*, vol. 141, No. 7, 111536d).

Shirwaikar and coworkers published a similar but not an identical work in 2004. We were not aware of the publication, as we

communicated the manuscript to *Current Science* on 2 September 2004. I apologize for missing their work. However, there are differences in details, when we compare our work with that by Shirwaikar and coworkers. We also tried publication of our results in various journals beginning 2003 but could not publish the work.

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