Two-fifths of world's plants at risk of extinction

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Scientists have revealed that around two-fifths of the world's plants are at risk of extinction. This stark warning comes from a piece of research called the State of the World's Plants and Fungi. More than 200 scientists analysed the state of play of the world's flora in 42 countries. A top botanist, Professor Alexandre Antonelli, said: "We are living in an age of extinction. It's a very worrying picture of risk and urgent need for action. We're losing the race against time because species are disappearing faster than we can find and name them. Many of them could hold important clues for solving some of the most pressing challenges of medicine and even perhaps of the emerging and current pandemics we are seeing today."

There have been positive signs in the past few years. More than 4,000 species of plants and fungi were discovered in 2019. Among these are potential future foods that could be a lifeline to millions of people on Earth suffering from poverty and food insecurity. Professor Antonelli stressed the importance of protecting these and all plant life on Earth. He said: "We would not be able to survive without plants and fungi – all life depends on them. Every time we lose a species, we lose an opportunity for humankind." The research was released on the day of a United Nations summit aimed at addressing this issue. Leading scientists will meet and insist world leaders act against biodiversity loss.

Sources: bbc.com / *thegurdian.com* / *yahoo.com*

Writing

There is nothing we can do to stop plants from going extinct. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

scientists / plants / extinction / warning / research / urgent / action / clue / pandemic / positive / sign / plant / poverty / importance / fungi / opportunity / humankind / loss

True / False

a) The warning about plant extinction comes from a piece of research. T / F

b) More than 42 scientists looked at the state of play regarding flora. T / F

c) A botanist warned that we are living in an age of extinction. T / F

d) The botanist said some new species could help fight pandemics. T / F

e) The article says 4,000 new plant species were found in the past decade. T / F

f) New plant species could be invaluable for the poor and hungry. T / F

g) A botanist said we could survive without fungi. T / F

h) Scientists said world leaders would not act to curb biodiversity loss. T / F

Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

1.	**revealed**	a.	signs
2.	**extinction**	b.	pressing
3.	**top**	c.	demand
4.	**urgent**	d.	dying out
5.	**clues**	e.	favorable
6.	**positive**	f.	remain alive
7.	**poverty**	g.	type
8.	**survive**	h.	disclosed
9.	**species**	i.	destitution
10.	**insist**	j.	leading

Discussion – Student A

a) What do you know about plants?

b) What are your favourite plants?

c) How important are plants?

d) How important are plants in your life?

e) Do we need to study more about plants at school?

f) What will happen as more and more plants become extinct?

g) What do you think of warnings like this?

h) How worried are you by this news?

Phrase Match

1. stark
2. We are living in an age
3. We're losing the race
4. some of the most pressing
5. the emerging and current
6. There have been positive signs in
7. a lifeline
8. suffering from
9. all life depends
10. a United Nations summit aimed at

a. to millions of people
b. pandemics
c. addressing this issue
d. warning
e. the past few years
f. challenges
g. on them
h. against time
i. poverty
j. of extinction

Discussion – Student B

a) What do you think about what you read?
b) What do you think of plants?
c) How useful are fungi?
d) Should we spend more money on genetically modifying plants?
e) How serious an issue is food insecurity?
f) How do you feel when we lose a species of plant?
g) What do you think world leaders will do about this problem?
h) What questions would you like to ask the researchers?

Spelling

1. Scientists have ldaeever that
2. the world's oflar
3. urtgne need for action
4. siecpse are disappearing
5. clues for sionlvg some
6. nimeegrg and current pandemics
7. ptsoievi signs
8. anoltitpe future foods
9. poverty and food ireiuntcys
10. plants and fguin
11. a United Nations uimsmt
12. act against eotivyrbsidi loss

Role Play

Role A – Cactus
You think a cactus is the most important plant. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their plant is not as important. Also, tell the others which is the least important of these (and why): bamboo, garlic or a cocoa plant.

Role B – Bamboo
You think bamboo is the most important plant. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their plant is not as important. Also, tell the others which is the least important of these (and why): a cactus, garlic or a cocoa plant.

Role C – Garlic
You think garlic is the most important plant. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their plant is not as important. Also, tell the others which is the least important of these (and why): bamboo, a cactus or a cocoa plant.

Role D – Cocoa Plant
You think a cocoa plant is the most important plant. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their plant is not as important. Also, tell the others which is the least important of these (and why): bamboo, garlic or a cactus.

Speaking – Plants & Fungi

Rank these with your partner. Put the most important at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- Garlic
- Pine tree
- Moss
- Cocoa plant
- Cactus
- Rose
- Mushroom
- Bamboo

Answers – Synonym Match

1. h	2. d	3. j	4. b	5. a
6. e	7. i	8. f	9. g	10. c

Answers – True False

a T	b F	c T	d T	e F	f T	g F	h F

Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.