***Nature Diary***

**Malabar Kino (*Pterocarpus marsupium)***

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It was the beginning of February when I saw a tree having no leaves but only pretty little circular fruits with papery wings, which got me very much fascinated! That instant, it became my favorite tree and I was curious to know more about it and this inquisitiveness led to explore further about these green wonders!

**Malabar Kino** (Family: **Fabaceae)** is a large deciduous tree native to India, Nepal and Sri Lanka that can grow up to 30 meters tall. It has dark grey or brown bark having narrow vertical flakes which makes the trunk to look shaggy. See the photo by Vinay Raj. Leaves are *pinnate* (feathery) and compound with wavy edges. The fragrant, yellow flowers are clustered and the fruits are circular with papery wing.

Leaves are shed by mid to late March and renewal is observed in early May. Flowering begins late in September, peaking by mid October. Fruits ripen and start to fall by February-March.

Butterflies like Tawny Rajah *Charaxes psaphon* and Chestnut-streaked Sailer *Neptis jumbah* lay their eggs on Kino.

Parts of Kino are long since used in folk and traditional systems of medicine and there is recent pharmacological interest as it has the ability to stimulate insulin production in the pancreas which will be effective in treating diabetes. This is a prospect for research and trials but people should strictly not use any part of any plant species as medicine unless directed by qualified professionals. Among the jungle timbers Kino commands a value second only to that of Teak and Rosewood. It is used to make furniture, doors, carts and beams and is a potential bio-diesel plant.

Malabar Kino is classified as “**Vulnerable”** under the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species and faces a high risk of endangerment in the wild and it is our duty to protect the species.

***Other pictures Source: Wikimedia commons***