

### ***BatStateU researchers explore Hoya diversity in Batangas, identify potential threats***

A team of researchers from Batangas State University (BatStateU) explored the diversity of *Hoya* species in the province of Batangas, Philippines particularly in Lobo. The study, which was conducted for almost two years, involved surveying, characterizing, and identifying *Hoya* species and their associated flora.

*Hoyas* are a genus of flowering plants in the family Apocynaceae. They are native to tropical and subtropical regions of Asia, Africa, and Australia. *Hoyas* are popular ornamental plants due to their waxy, succulent-type leaves and attractive flowers.

The BatStateU researchers found a total of 41 morphospecies of plants from 22 families were recorded. All species recorded were native to the Philippines, with 6 (14.63%) endemic to the country, and 8 (19.51%) had true threatened categories, excluding Least Concern (LC) of IUCN (Philippine Red List or DAO 2017 – 11 = 6, IUCN Red List = 3). They also identified a number of potential threats to *Hoya* populations in the province, including habitat loss and fragmentation.

One of the key findings of the study was that *Hoya* populations in Batangas are located in Lobo ecotourism sites. This means that these populations are subject to increased human activity, which can lead to disturbances and damage. The researchers also found that local communities have little knowledge about the existence and importance of *Hoya* species.

The researchers recommend that conservation efforts for *Hoya* species in Batangas should focus on the following:

- Raising awareness among local communities about the importance of *Hoya* species and the need to conserve them
- Developing sustainable management plans for *Hoya* populations in ecotourism sites
- Establishing ex situ conservation programs for *Hoya* species

The researchers also recommend that further studies be conducted to assess the genetic diversity of *Hoya* populations in Batangas and to identify other potential threats to these populations.

The municipality of Lobo is a host town of Batangas State University- Lobo Campus.

#### **Additional detail:**

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