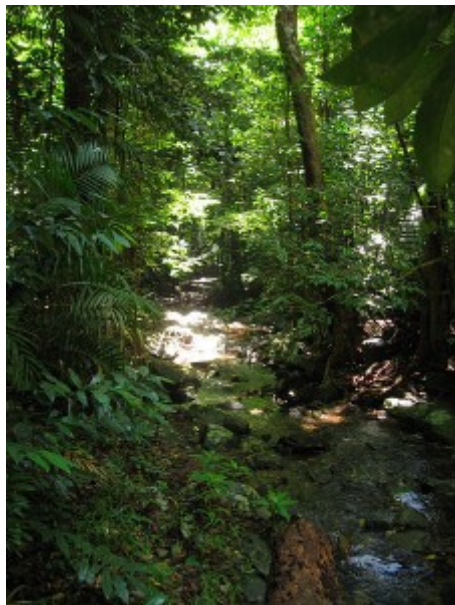


New metal-eating plant discovered in the Philippines

Researchers from the University of the Philippines, Los Banos, have discovered a new plant species that accumulates enormous amounts of nickel. Hyperaccumulators are plants capable of growing in soils with high concentrations of metals, extracting these metals through their roots and storing them in their tissues without being poisoned.

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Hyperaccumulators can be used to extract metals from contaminated soils

Hyperaccumulators are of great value as they can be used to extract metals from contaminated soils, a process known as phytoremediation, and collect commercially valuable metals, or Phytomining.

Nonetheless, of the 450,000 species of vascular plants known, only 450 are hyperaccumulators, and of these only 1% can accumulate the concentrations that the newly discovered species, *Rinorea niccolifera*, can. This species can store up to 18,000 ppm by weight, making their dried leaves almost 2% nickel, reports leading author Edwino Fernando in *PhytoKeys*.

The researchers hope that the discovery of this species may encourage future research into applications of hyperaccumulators for soil purification.

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