

SRI LANKA

Stamp

Bulletin No. 114

Definitive Issue

FLOWERS OF SRI LANKA



1982 - 04 - 01

**Philatelic Bureau
Department of Posts
Ceylinco House
Colombo 1
SRI LANKA**

STAMP BULLETIN No. 114

Ministry of Posts and
Telecommunications,
Lotus Road,
Colombo 1,
Sri Lanka.
April 01, 1982.

THE Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications will issue today four stamps in the denominations of 35 cents, Rs. 2.00, Rs. 7.00 and Rs. 20.00. These stamps are depicting four indigenous flowers of Sri Lanka.

The favourable climate and the diverse topography of Sri Lanka sustains a rich natural flora. Man's intervention has resulted in the introduction of many exotic species especially from the new world tropics. Several of these species are now naturalized and form familiar plants of our landscape. It is estimated that there are 3,000 species of flowering plants and of these about 840 species are endemic to the Island. The endemic species are of special interest to the botanist, conservationist and nature lovers. Attempts are being made by State Departments and Voluntary Organizations to preserve some of the natural habitats in which our endemics are found growing. Flowers of four of the endemic species were depicted and released as stamps on 1st January, 1976. Four more beautiful but indigenous flowers of our flora are being released as stamps. They are *Mesua nagassarium*, *Osbeckia wightiana*, *Phaius tancarvilleae* and *Rhodomyrtus tomentosa*.

35 cts.—*Osbeckia wightiana* is a common attractive flowering shrub along roadsides and forest margins at Nuwara Eliya, Hakgala and Horton Plains. The slender branches and branchlets are quadrangular and rough to the touch. The oval leaves are 3-4 inches long and 1-2 inches broad with five main veins arching from the base to the apex. The veins are raised on the lower surface of the leaves. The bright pink flowers are about $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches in diameter with five petals. The marking of the veins are very clear on the petals. The stamens are yellow and twice the number of the petals. The cup-like calyx bearing the petals and later enclosing the fruit is covered with star-shaped bristles or hairs. The shrubs are in flower all round the year. This species is also found growing wild in the Hill Stations of South India. The genus *Osbeckia* has over 50 species and it was named after Peter Osbeck who collected plants for Linnaeus from Japan and China.

Rs. 2.00—*Mesua nagassarium* is a slow growing evergreen tree of moderate size found growing wild in the lowcountry rain forests of Sri Lanka. A cultivated form that differs slightly from the wild species is commonly planted in parks and temples. The tree grows up to a height of about 80 feet and has a fluted trunk. The leaves are opposite and in pairs. Mature leaves are stiff and dark green on the upper surface and powdery white on the under-surface. The young flush droops from the branches and has a bright red or pink coloration and this adds to the ornamental value of this species. The flowers are rather large and are

found in the axils of leaves. The large solitary flowers are mildly fragrant and have four white crumpled petals. The numerous yellow stamens in the centre of the flower form a striking contrast against the background of the white petals. The flowering period is from April to May with the onset of the South-West Monsoon but fruiting is not very common in cultivated trees. A closely related endemic species called Diya-Na is found along streams in the low country.

Rs. 7.00—*Rhodomyrtus tomentosa* is a woody shrub or small tree growing up to a height of about 6 feet. The leaves are opposite, rough and shortly stalked. The leaves are $1\frac{1}{2}$ -3 inches (3.5-8.0 cm.) long with three main veins arising from the basal part of the leaf and arching towards the apex. Like in *Osbeckia wightiana* the veins stand out very prominently on the under surface of the leaves. The lower surface of mature leaves and young leaves are covered with white wooly hairs. The specific name of the plant refers to this trait of the plant. The plant is in flower during most months of the year and 2-3 flowers arise in the axils of the leaves. Petals are five in number, oval shaped and of a delicate pink colour. The numerous stamens are clustered in the centre of the flower. The same species also occurs in the Nilgiri Hills, South India. While it is a montane species in Sri Lanka and South India, it grows at sea-level in Hong Kong.

Rs. 20.00—*Phaius tancarvilleae* is a handsome ground orchid with a wide geographical distribution having been recorded from Sikkim, Burma, Indonesia, Hong Kong, Formosa, Fiji, Australia and Madagascar. In Sri Lanka it grows wild in the montane regions of Rangala, Hakgala and Adams Peak Wilderness. It is also cultivated in Europe with glass-house protection in winter. The plant grows to a height of about 50 cm. and it has a pseudobulb, leafy stem and vermiform roots. The lamina of the leaves are oblong, lanceolate and pleated and the petioles are long and slender. The inflorescence is rather stout and carries 3-10 attractive flowers. A fully open flower is about 8 cm. in diameter. The three sepals and 2 petals are white outside and orange-brown inside. The third innerpetal referred to as the lip or labellum is white with a tinge of yellow and purple colours and it is rolled up surrounding the column or gynostegium. The flowers last about 3 weeks. There is scope for improving the plant for horticultural purposes.

(Courtesy: Prof. S. Balasubramaniam, Dept. of Botany, University of Peradeniya.)

Philatelic Details

<i>Date of Issue</i>	: 1982.04.01
<i>Value</i>	: 35 cts., Rs. 2/-, Rs. 7/-, Rs. 20/- Miniature sheet: Rs. 29.35
<i>Colour</i>	: Multi-colour
<i>Designer</i>	: P. S. P. Jayatilleke
<i>Printers</i>	: Security Printers, Malaysia
<i>Format</i>	: Horizontal
<i>Size</i>	: 28 × 38 mm.

<i>Printing Process</i>	: Offset
<i>Sheet Composition</i>	: 100 stamps per sheet
<i>Paper</i>	: 102 G.S.M. Stamp Paper
<i>Gum</i>	: Tropical gum

Official First Day Covers

The Philatelic Bureau will provide a specially designed First Day Cover and a First Day of Issue Postmark.

Terms of Sale

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Stamp Issues—1982

<i>Serial No.</i>	<i>Theme</i>	<i>Denomination</i>	<i>Date of Issue</i>	
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2.	Philip Gunawardane	.. 50 cents ..	82.01.11	
3.	50 Years—Department of Inland Revenue	of 50 cents ..	82.02.09	
4.	Inauguration of National T. V.	Rs. 2.50 ..	82.02.15	
5.	Sri Lanka First Test Cricket Match	Rs. 2.50 ..	82.02.17	
6.	Flowers of Sri Lanka*	.. 35 cents Rs. 2/- Rs. 7/- Rs. 20/-	} 82.04.01	
7.	Opening of New Parliament Building	50 cents ..		82.04.29
8.	Food and Nutrition Policy Planning	50 cents ..		82.04.06
9.	Vesak—1982*	.. 35 cents 50 cents Rs. 2.50 Rs. 5.00		} 82.04.20
10.	World Hindu Conference	.. 50 cents ..	82.04.21	
11.	Rev. Welivita Sri Saranankara Sangharaja	50 cents	} 82.05.22	
12.	Dr. C. W. W. Kannangara	.. 50 cents		
13.	Sir Waithyalingam Durai-swamy	.. 50 cents		
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16.	World Buddhist Congress	.. — ..	82.06.01	
17.	125th Birth Anniversary of Lord Baden Powel	of 50 cents ..	82.05.24	
18.	World Environment Day	.. — ..	82.06.05	

<i>Serial No.</i>	<i>Theme</i>	<i>Denomination</i>	<i>Date of Issue</i>
19.	Centenary of Y. M. C. A.	Colombo Rs. 2.50 ..	82.06.24
20.	25 Years—Sasana Samithiya	Sevaka 50 cents ..	82.07.11
21.	World-wide Sight Conservation Project	Conser- — ..	82.10.
22.	Sir Oliver Goonatillake	.. 50 cents ..	82.10.20
23.	Centenary Celebration—Dr. Robert Coch	— ..	
24.	125th Anniversary of Sri Lanka Postage Stamp		

Dates and values are subject to alteration.
 *Souvenir sheet available.