



Mt Elgon is an extinct volcanic mountain at the Kenya-Uganda border. It is the oldest among the East African mountains formed about 24 million years ago. Today, it is the eighth highest but is believed to have once been the highest peak in Africa.

The first step in effective conservation and sustainable use of natural resources is acknowledging their existence. Plants form part of the most fundamental natural resources. This study reports an expansive checklist of the flora of Mt Elgon comprising of 1709 taxa (1589 species, 75 subspecies and 45 varieties) in 673 genera from 131 families. The plant taxa were classified into five classes namely: Magnoliopsida making 72% of the total number of species, Liliopsida, 23%, Polypodiopsida 4%, Lycopodiopsida 0.4%, and Pinopsida 0.2%. Species rich families recorded include; Asteraceae, Fabaceae, Orchidaceae, and Poaceae. There are 144 exotic species while 103 species were locally or regionally endemic. Taxa conservation status indicated 2 Near Threatened (NT), 9 Vulnerable (VU), 4 Endangered (EN) and 2 Critically Endangered (CR) species. One new species (*Peponium elgonense*) of the family Cucurbitaceae was reported to science.

This study provides a comprehensive plant species-list that broadens the scope of possible ecological and phylogenetic studies in this region.

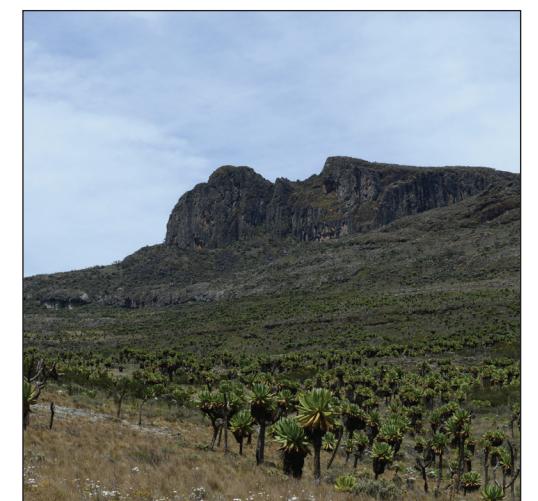
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AN ANNOTATED PLANT CHECKLIST OF THE TRANSBOUNDARY VOLCANIC MT ELGON, EAST AFRICA

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Mt Elgon, East Africa

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