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Q28

Which one of the following shows a unique relationship with an insect that has coevolved with it and that is the only insect that ta pollinate this tree ? (a) Fig (b) Mahua (c) Sandalwood (d) Silk cotton Official key: A.

UPSC Civil Services Prelims 2024 · General Studies · 2 marks · Environment and Ecology
Environment, ecology, climate, biodiversity - Prelims GS Paper I.

Explanation**(a) Official key**

Fig. Each fig species is pollinated by its own **fig wasp** - a classic obligate mutualism.

(b)

Mahua. Bat- and insect-pollinated, not a single coevolved insect.

(c)

Sandalwood. Not an obligate one-insect tree in this sense.

(d)

Silk cotton. Bird- and bat-pollinated kapok/semal, not a unique wasp.

Summary

Official key is (a) fig. Ficus and agaonid fig wasps are the textbook coevolved pair: the wasp is the only pollinator of that fig, and the fig is the only host of that wasp. Mahua, sandalwood and silk cotton do not have that exclusive insect lock.

Related possible facts

These can be asked in a future Prelims paper.

Fig wasp

Agaonidae; enters the syconium to pollinate and lay eggs.

Syconium

The enclosed fig inflorescence.

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