

The following message was distributed to various journalists via email.

From: Kevin Nolan

Sent: Thursday, December 19, 2024 8:53 AM

To:

Subject: Press Releaser - NEOM Announces Discovery of Eight Previously Unrecorded Native Plant Species in Saudi Arabia

Hello – Kindly find below some exciting news from NEOM and the Saudi Ministry of Water, Environment and Agriculture for potential coverage. If interested in photos, or a comment or interview with Dr. Paul Marshall, the Head of Nature at NEOM or Dhiya Zaidan, the Project Manager from the Landscape Team at NEOM, please let me know.

وزارة البيئة والمياه والزراعة

Ministry of Environment Water & Agriculture



نيوم NEOM

MEWA and NEOM Announce Discovery of Eight Previously Unrecorded Native Plant Species in Saudi Arabia

Riyadh – December 18, 2024 – The Ministry of Environment, Water, and Agriculture (MEWA) and NEOM, the ‘land of the future’ under development in northwest Saudi Arabia, have revealed the discovery of eight native plant species that were not previously recorded in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

This discovery is the result of the ‘NEOM Flora Program,’ a two-phased program that included a comprehensive study of the geology, soil, watershed hydrology, ecology, and topography of NEOM. The program supports NEOM’s broader commitment to protect 95% of nature and the ongoing efforts to document and restore its unique biodiversity.

On this occasion, the Deputy Minister of Environment, Water and Agriculture (for Agriculture), Eng. Ahmad Alayadh said: "The new plant species have been documented at the National Herbarium within Seed Center and Plant Genetic Resources Bank in Riyadh. These species represent a significant addition to the recorded flora of Saudi Arabia." Eng. Alayadh praised the team behind this achievement.

Eng. Alayadh added that the eight new plant species include *Bituminaria flaccida* (Nábělek) Greuter, *Cicer judaicum* Boiss, *Crambe hispanica* L, *Diploaxis tenuifolia* (L.) DC, *Hyoscyamus boveanus* (Dunal) Asch. & Schweinf, *Muscari longipes* subsp. *Longipes*, *Phagnalon nitidum* Fresen, and *Plantago sinaica* (Barnéoud) Decne.

Dr. Paul Marshall, Head of the NEOM Nature Reserve, said: "The NEOM Nature Reserve is protecting and restoring NEOM’s extraordinary landscape. Our nature conservation work

is supported by careful planning and management in NEOM's development areas. The NEOM Flora Program is an example of this planning and underscores NEOM's commitment to greening and rewilding its natural environment."

Dhiya Zaidan, Landscape Team Manager in NEOM's Urban Planning Department, added: "Understanding the native plant palette is essential for creating sustainable urban landscape designs in development areas. Over the past two and a half years, this initiative has yielded remarkable results, including documenting 345 local plant species, 28 rare species and eight new registered plant species not previously recorded in the Kingdom. This wouldn't have been possible without the dedication and commitment of our researchers and scientists on the ground."

Launched in 2021, the 'Flora Program' is one of NEOM's key initiatives to document and conserve the region's natural heritage. The program helps to improve knowledge of the local vegetation and plant species found in the region. NEOM is committed to protecting 95% of its nature, a central pillar of this commitment is to establish a world-class protected area.

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