

# The cheer of mango trees in full bloom

Abundant flowering visible across the State; farm department orders a study

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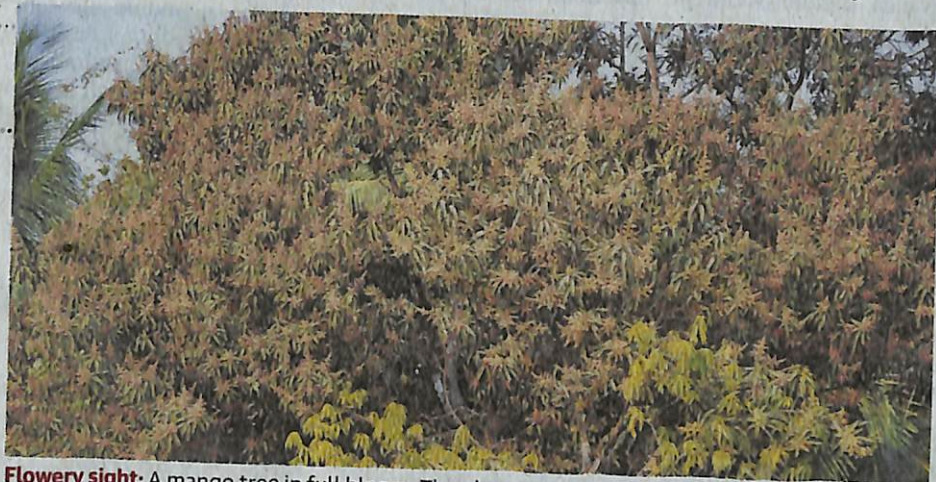
Call it the curious case of the mango blooms. The flowering of mango trees in extraordinary abundance ahead of the summer has come as a complete surprise to the Agriculture Department which has now ordered a study to identify the cause.

Agriculture Minister V.S. Sunil Kumar has asked the Director of Research, Kerala Agricultural University (KAU), to study this astonishing phenomenon.

Mango trees in Kerala had broken out in copious blooms at a time when north Indian States had reported reduced flowering this year, Mr. Sunil Kumar said.

Whether climate change had anything to do with the phenomenon was being looked into, he said said on Monday. KAU is also examining whether the 2018 floods have acted as a trigger.

Similar occurrences have



**Flowery sight:** A mango tree in full bloom. The phenomenon is being observed in Kerala when north Indian States have reported reduced flowering.

been reported in some years in Tamil Nadu, the Minister's office quoted R.M. Vijayakumar, Professor and Head, Department of Fruit Crops, Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, as saying. In Tamil Nadu, it is caused by the drought-induced stress on the trees during the flowering season.

P. Indiradevi, Director of

Research, KAU, said the university would file its report at the earliest.

## Cashew trees too

The KAU study would also cover cashew trees, she said. "The mango bloom phenomenon is visible throughout the State, but is more pronounced in the north. We have to ascertain whether it

is caused by stress factors triggered by the recent floods, or whether by the long-term changes in temperatures, or by something else altogether," she said.

The abundant flowering had, predictably, triggered happy hopes of a bountiful mango harvest this year. But this need not always be the case, Dr. Indiradevi said.