

**Invading plant Lantana and its effects on
minimizing the food habitats
of elephants that creates human-elephant
conflict in the Udawalawe National Park**

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Among the issues in Sri Lanka today, the human-elephant conflict is a major problem that affects on the environmental, social, economic and agricultural sectors. However, there can not be identified any sustainable procedure to minimize this conflict so far. Also, around 120 elephants and 60 humans are losing their lives annually due to the human-elephant conflict in Sri Lanka. Udawalawe park covering 30821 hectares is a habitat for 350 to 400 elephants. The main aim is to examine how the rapid spread of Lantana plant minimizes the food habitats of elephants and to what extent it maximizes the human-elephant conflict. Lantana plant has covered for more than 10000 hectare upto now. Specially, the Lantana plant mostly has occupied over grass lands. Hadagirigoda, Aluthwewa, Galpaya G.N.divisions were selected for this study and 80 families were selected randomly for questionnaire survey.

In this study, 83% of the people agreed that the main reason for the elephant invasion of villages is the shortage of food. Also the study revealed that the shortage of food for elephants have occurred due to the spread of Lantana plant in the area. Therefore, identified that the proper removal of Lantana will lead to protect food habitats of elephants and thereby could minimize the human-elephant conflict in the area.