

Leonardo 'Tree' Caprio: new species named after star

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The Hollywood A-lister campaigned against logging in the pristine reserve.

A new tree species has been named after actor Leonardo DiCaprio as a tribute to the Hollywood star's anti-logging campaigning, London's Royal Botanic Gardens announced Thursday.

The evergreen with large yellowish-green flowers, which was found in Cameroon's Ebo forest, was the first new species to be officially named in 2022 by botanists from the renowned gardens in the London borough of Kew.

The tree's [scientific name](#)—*Uvariopsis dicaprio*—recognises the 47-year-old US actor's work to prevent logging in the endangered forest, where the only known specimen of the tree was found growing.

The Hollywood A-lister campaigned on social media after Cameroon granted permission for logging in the pristine wildlife reserve in 2020.

The concession was cancelled months later by Cameroon's President Paul Biya, "surely partly due to his support", the scientists wrote in [PeerJ online journal](#), referring to DiCaprio.

"We very much appreciated the support Leo gave us in campaigning to protect Ebo last year so it seemed fitting to honour him in this way," said Martin Cheek, who leads the Africa team in Kew's identification and naming department.

"Had the logging concession gone ahead, we would have likely lost this species to timber extraction and slash and burn agriculture that usually follows [logging](#) concessions," Cheek added.

The *Uvariopsis dicaprio* has been provisionally listed as critically endangered.

The sole known specimen, which measures four metres (13 feet) high and has only male flowers, was discovered next to a footpath, the scientists said.

DiCaprio, best known for the 1997 film "Titanic", currently stars as an

astronomer in the Netflix comedy "Don't Look Up" about scientists trying to draw the world's attention to a comet heading towards Earth.

He himself has nevertheless been criticised for flying in a private jet to pick up an environmental award in 2016.

Scientists at Kew have been naming new species of plants and fungi for more than 150 years.

It is not unusual for [species](#) to be named after celebrities.

A Caribbean crustacean parasite is named after reggae star Bob Marley, an Australian horse fly is named after the singer Beyonce and a frog has been named after Prince Charles.

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