

Occurrence of *Dalechampia scandens* L. var. *cordofana* (Hochst. ex Webb) Müll. Arg. (Euphorbiaceae) in Eastern Ghats of Tamil Nadu

A. Rajendran, A.* and M. Parthipan

The genus *Dalechampia* has been represented by only three species in India. *D. velutina* Wt. and *D. kurzii* have been reported from high altitude regions of Nilgiri Hills and Assam respectively, While *D. indica* has been recorded from the plains of Deccan peninsula, Coromandal and also from some hills in Saurashtra (Kathiawar).

During the botanical explorations in the Yercaud hills of the Eastern Ghats, specimens of *Dalechampia* was collected. Various regional and national floras and research article were referred in order to check the identify, availability and abundance of the particular plant. It was identified as *Dalechampia scandens* L. var. *cordofana* (Hochst. ex Webb) Müll.Arg. The plant has been recorded for the first time from India by Chavan *et al.* (1962) from Vasad, 10 miles NW of Baroda (Gujarat) suggesting further work to understand the distribution of this plant in India.

Occurrence of the *Dalechampia scandens* L. var. *cordofana* (Hochst. ex Webb) Müll. in the Yercaud Hills of the Eastern Ghats of Tamil Nadu shows its extended distribution in the Southern India.

Taxonomic descriptions

Dalechampia scandens* L. var. *cordofana (Hochst. ex Webb) Müll. Arg. in De Candolle, Prodr. 15, 2: 1245 1866; Chavan *et al.* in Rec. Bot. Surv. India 3: 115. 1962. *Dalechampia cordofana* Hochst. ex Webb in Hooker, Niger Fl.: 178 (1849) (sphalm. cordafana); Chakrab. & N.P.Balakr. in J. Econ. Taxon. Bot. 32: 602. 2008. Type from Sudan. *Dalechampia parvifolia* Lam., Encycl. Méth. Bot. 2: 258. 1786. Type in P-JU, erroneously signified as from China. *Dalechampia scandens* var. *parvifolia* (Lam.) Müll. Arg. in De Candolle, Prodr. 15, 2: 1245. 1866; Prain in F.T.A. 6, 1: 954. 1912. Type as above.

A slender twiner. Stems puberulous. Petioles 0.5-2.5 cm long. Leaf-blade tripartite, the median lobe elliptic-lanceolate, 2-4 cm long, c. 1 cm wide, 1-nerved from the base, the laterals asymmetrically lanceolate, slightly smaller, 2-nerved from the base; lobes acute, less often subacute or obtuse, minutely glandular-serrate to subentire; blade wide-cordate at the base, sparingly puberulous above and beneath. Stipules narrowly lanceolate, 4-5 mm long, sparingly puberulous. Stipels 1 mm long. Inflorescences



Fig. 1: A. Habitat; B. Flower

usually axillary; peduncles 2 cm long; one of a pair of bracts usually trilobate, the other elovate, both triangular-ovate in outline, 1-2 cm long, 6-7 mm wide, acute, serrulate, rounded at the base, 7-nerved from the base, puberulous, yellowish-green; bract-stipules resembling the leaf-stipules; male peduncles 2 mm long; male involucre c. 5 mm across, ± glabrous; aborted flower-mass flattened; female bracts 2-3 mm long, ± entire, ciliate. Male flowers: pedicels 2-3 mm long; sepals elliptic-ovate, 1.5 x 1 mm, becoming reflexed, minutely puberulous without, glabrous within, greenish-yellow; stamina] column 1.5 mm high; anthers minute, yellow. Female flowers: pedicels c. 1 mm long, extending in fruit; sepals 6(-10), pinnatifid, elliptic in outline, 2 mm long, enlarging to 1 cm in fruit, with c. 4 pairs of linear gland-tipped lateral lobes, strigose-hirsute, the hairs urticating; disc 0; ovary 1 mm diam., densely pubescent; styles 5 mm long, dilated and excavated at the apex, glabrous. Fruits trilobate, 4-5 mm x 5-7 mm, pubescent, brown. Seeds spherical, 3 mm diam., grey, brown-mottled and streaked (Fig.1).

Flowering & Fruiting: July – August.

Ecology: Found on exposed rock surfaces (epilithic) and rock crevices (chasmoendolithophytic) at some cool areas in hills or hill slopes of Yercaud at an altitude of c. 1400 m.. The average maximum temperature here is 23°C.

Specimen examined: Yercaud hills, Eastern Ghats of Tamil Nadu, India, 12.11.2012, coll. M. Parthipan & A. Rajendran, 225 Bharathiar University,

Dalechampia scandens L. var. *cordofana* (Hochst. ex Webb) Müll. Arg.



Department of Botany Herbarium (BUH).

Distribution: Gujarat, Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu in India; and Trop. Africa, Arabia and Pakistan.

References

- Chavan, A.R., S.D. Sabnis and S.J. Bedi (1962). Rec. Bot. Sur. India 3: 115.
Chavan, A.R. & S.J. Bedi (1962). *Dalechampia scandens* L. var. *cordofana* (Hochst.) Muell.-Arg. – a new record for India. Curr. Sci. 31: 115.

Acknowledgements: Thanks are due to Prof. Dr. S. Manian, Head, Department of Botany, Bharathiar University, Coimbatore, for facilities and encouragement. We extend our sincere thanks to Dr. G.V.S. Murthy, Joint-Director, Botanical Survey of India, Southern Circle, Coimbatore, for providing facilities to the literature collections.

Taxonomic and Floristics laboratory,
Department of Botany, School of Life
Sciences, Bharathiar University,
Coimbatore, TN, India
*Corresponding Author E-mail:
arajendran222@yahoo.com.