

# A note on the taxonomy and distribution of *Thunia alba* var. *bracteata* (Orchidaceae) in India

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The genus, *Thunia* Rchb.f. belonging to Orchidaceae, comprises six species, distributed in India, China and Southeast Asia (Pearce & Cribb, 2002). In India, the genus is represented by *T. alba* (Lindl.) Rchb.f. var. *alba* and *T. alba* var. *bracteata* (Roxb.) N. Pearce & P.J. Cribb. The typical variety is distributed in Himalaya, Andaman Islands, Peninsular, East and Northeast India (Karthikeyan *et.al.*, 1989). *T. alba* var. *bracteata* is reported from Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Odisha and Sikkim. It differs from the typical variety in lacking a yellow patch on the lip. Haines (1924) included it based on a collection by Fr. Cardon from Sarguj. Similarly, this taxon has also been included for the state of Bihar (Singh *et.al.*, 2001) and Madhya Pradesh (Khanna, 2001) based on the same collection. However, Sarguj – the place of collection, is presently in the political boundary of Chhattisgarh state. Kumar *et.al.* (2007) who recently surveyed the Orchidaceae of Chotanagpur, Jharkhand, also did not record this species. There is also no record or report on the occurrence of this species in any of the existing literature pertaining to the flora of Andhra Pradesh, including the recently published flora of Visakhapatnam district by Subba Rao & Kumari (2008).

Apart, there is neither a representative specimen of this taxon available in any of the Indian herbaria from the states of Jharkhand and Andhra Pradesh. During the floristic survey of the Dalma Wildlife Sanctuary, Jharkhand, a specimen of *Thunia* was collected. Subsequently, KNR also collected it from the Eastern Ghats of Andhra Pradesh (Sapparla RF, Narsipatnam Forest division, Visakhapatnam district). On critical observation with authentic literature the specimens were



Fig. 1 *Thunia alba* var. *bracteata* (Roxb) N. Pearce & P.J. Cribb: Habitat and Habit



Fig. 2 Close-up view

identified as *T. alba* var. *bracteata* hitherto not reported from Jharkhand and Andhra Pradesh.

***Thunia alba*** (Lindl.) Rchb.f. var. ***bracteata*** (Roxb.) N. Pearce & P.J. Cribb, Edinburgh J. Bot. 58(1): 116. 2001 & Fl. Bhutan 3(3): 323, f. 77m – o. 2002. *Limodorum bracteatum* Roxb., Fl. Ind. (Ed. Carey) 3: 466. 1832. *Thunia venosum* Rolfe, Orch. Rev. 13: 206. 1905; Haines, Bot. Bihar Orissa: 1167. 1924 (as '*venosa*'); C.J. Saldanha in C.J. Saldanha &

Nicolson, Fl. Hassan Distr. : 853. 1976 (as '*venosa*'); Karthik. & al., Fl. Ind. Enum. Monocotyl.: 174. 1989 (as '*venosa*'); Lakshmin. in B.D. Sharma & al., Fl. Maharashtra Monocotyl.: 62. 1996. *T.*

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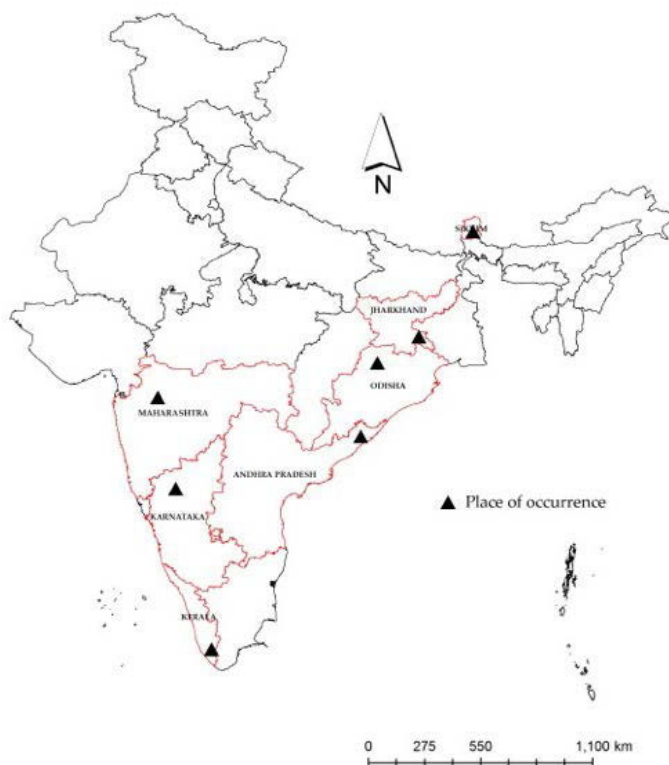
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**Fig. 3** *Thunia alba* var. *bracteata* (Roxb) N. Pearce & P.J. Cribb: a. Habit; b. Flower; c. lip and column; d. Lip



**Image 4.** Distribution of *Thunia alba* var. *bracteata*

*bracteata* (Roxb.) Schltr., Repert. Spec. Nov. Regni Veg. Beih. 4: 205. 1919; Saxena & Brahmam, Fl. Orissa: 1874. 1995; T.S. Nayar & al., Fl. Pl. Kerala – Handb.: 762. 2006.

Epiphytic herb, up to 1 m high. Stem stout, erect; basal sheaths tubular, ovate, acute at apex, 1.5 – 2.5 cm long. Leaves many, narrowly elliptic-lanceolate to oblong-lanceolate, acuminate at apex, 10.5 – 25 × 2 – 3.5 cm, membranous, glaucous beneath. Inflorescence pendent, 4 – 8-flowered; peduncles 2 – 5 cm long, sheathed; sheath 1, tubular, lanceolate, acute at apex, c. 4 cm long; rachis 2 – 3.8 cm long; floral bracts oblong or boat-shaped, acute at apex, 4 – 5.5 × 1 – 1.2 cm. Flowers 4 – 5 cm long; sepals and petals white; lip white; pedicel and ovary 1 – 1.5 cm long. Sepals narrowly oblong-ovate, acute to obtuse at apex, subequal, 4.5 – 6 × 1 – 1.2 cm. Petals oblong, acute at apex, 4.5 – 5.5 × 0.8 – 1 cm. Lip broadly oblong-pandurate (when spread), spurred, 4.5 – 5 × 2.5 – 4.5 cm (at base), strongly purple-nerved, basal half convolute into a tube, apical half-hooded, dentate-undulate at margins; disk with 5 to 9 dentate-fimbriate ridges; spur c. 1.5 × 0.3 cm. Column expanded and winged at apex, 1.3 – 1.4 cm long; foot short. Fruits narrowly ellipsoid, 3 – 3.5 × c. 1 cm.

Flowering & Fruiting: March – July.  
Habitat: Dry Deciduous Forests, at 800 m.

Distribution: INDIA: Andhra Pradesh (Sapparala RF, Narsipatnam Forest Division, Visakhapatnam District), Jharkhand (Dalma Wildlife Sanctuary; Rare), Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Odisha and Sikkim. WORLD: Bhutan and Nepal.

Specimens examined:  
P. Lakshminarasimhan & C.R. Magesh 43929, Dalma Top, Saraikala District, Jharkhand, 27.viii.2008, (CAL); K.N. Reddy 6693, Narsipatnam Forest Division, R.V. Nagar Range, Sapparala RF, 1000 m, Visakhapatnam District, Andhra Pradesh, 2.ix.2010 (Herbarium, Laila Impex R & D Centre).

Note: An epiphyte on *Terminalia tomentosa* (Roxb.) Wight & Arn.

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