

## Recollection of *Osbeckia nayarii* Giri (Melastomataceae) from Assam after 108 years



A—Habit |  
B—Flowering twig |  
C—Leaves and winged  
stem | D—Dissected  
flower.  
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Assam the second largest state in the northeastern India, is situated south of the eastern Himalaya along the Brahmaputra & Barak river valleys, and it holds a great diversity and contributes a lot to the country's flora.

The genus *Osbeckia* L. (Melastomataceae) is represented by 23 species and four varieties under four

sections in India and the state of Assam holds a total of nine taxa under the sections *Asterostoma*, *Ceramicalyx*, & *Osbeckia* (Prashob & Thomas 2019).

*Osbeckia nayarii* was first described by G.S. Giri in the year 1983 based on the specimens collected by C.B. Clarke from Khasia hills of Meghalaya in the year

1886 (Giri 1983). In 1886, an additional collection was done by Dr. King's collector from Chittagong hills tracts of Bangladesh (No. 239; Acc. No. 171989) which was traced in CAL (Giri & Mandal 2001). However, our present observations revealed that it is quite a common species in both Khasi and Garo Hills of Meghalaya.

All the above mentioned and additional collections examined were made specific from the state of Meghalaya and one from Bangladesh. However, specific to current geographical boundaries of Assam, the species is rare and until date only one collection of this species was made by U.N. Kanjilal in the year 1914 from Goalpara district.

During our visit to Goalpara district, we found a peculiar *Osbeckia* (L.) in Barali Pahar of Goalpara, Assam. After going through the relevant literature (Giri 1983; Giri & Mandal 2001; Prashob & Thomas 2016), it is identified as *Osbeckia nayarii* G.S.Giri, which constitutes its rediscovery for the state after 108 years. The present article provides information on taxonomy of the species, habitat and its distribution.

Field photographs were taken for easy and better recognition of the species. Collected specimens were dried, poisoned, and mounted on herbarium sheets following Jain & Rao (1977). The herbarium sheets are deposited at Herbarium of Rajiv Gandhi University for future references. Flowers are dissected, measured for proper characterization of the species.

***Osbeckia nayarii*** G.S.Giri, J. Econ. Taxon. Bot. 4: 609 (1983)

Type: India. Meghalaya, Khasia hills, 600 m. 14.ix.1886, C.B. Clarke 44776A (holo: CAL)  
Diagnostic characters: Branched herbs, stem and branches strongly quadrangular and distinctly winged at angles, glabrous. Leaves ovate-elliptic to ovate-lanceolate, 5-nerved.

Inflorescence axillary or terminal condensed panicle; bracts ovate, calyx tubes (hypanthium), urceolate, glabrous; intersepal emergences rudimentary, as a simple hair. Petals ovate-oblong, pinkish-purple. Capsule enclosed by urceolate, glabrous calyx-tube with a distinct long neck.

**Flowering & fruiting:** July–November.

**Habitat:** Occurs in the grasslands as well as hill slopes above 200 m.

**Distribution:** India (Assam, Kerala, Meghalaya & Tamil Nadu), Bangladesh.

**Specimens examined:** India, Assam: Goalpara district, Goalpara, 1914, Upendranath Kanjilal 6914 (CAL); Goalpara, Barali Pahar, 2021, Raja Saikia & Niku Das 0082 (Herbarium of Rajiv Gandhi University).

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