



First report of *Pseuderanthemum malabaricum* (Acanthaceae) –Rare species of central and southern Eastern Ghats of Tamil Nadu, India

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ABSTRACT

The major part of Eastern Ghats comes under the state of Tamil Nadu. It is spread over three States of India, namely Orissa, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu. The author had collected this species the first time in localities of Odamandurai odai, Karanthamalai hills, Dindigul district of Eastern Ghats, form the shady places and River margins. Recorded only from North of Tamil Nadu, the present collection assumes significance as the first report of an extended distribution to central Tamil Nadu.

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Introduction

The Eastern Ghats are located along the Peninsular India extending over 1750 km with average width of about 100 km and covering the area under 11° 03' to 22° 32' N latitudes and 77° 02' to 87° 02' E longitudes. Major part of Eastern Ghats comes under the state of Tamil Nadu. It is spread over three States of India, namely Orissa, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu. The average elevation of the Eastern Ghats is about 750 meters [3]. While working on the floristic of Karanthamalai hills of Dindigul district of Eastern Ghats, Southern part of the Tamil Nadu are known for their rich biodiversity. Eastern Ghats are broken hills with low elevation but very rich in species diversity with considerable rare and endemic plant species.

Pseuderanthemum malabaricum belongs to family Acanthaceae [1]. This genus *Pseuderanthemum* Radlk., consist of 60 species, distributed in Tropics [2]. In India represented by eight species and two varieties [5]. While checking the earlier collections of this species maintained at the Southern Circle, Botanical Survey of India, Coimbatore, it was observed that the collections were a few only and were exclusively confined to Vellore. During the floristic investigations of Central and Southern Eastern Ghats Tamil Nadu (2013-2014), the author had collected this species the first time in localities of Odamandurai odai, Karanthamalai hills, Dindigul district of Eastern Ghats, form the shady places and River margins. Recorded only from North of Tamil Nadu, the present collection assumes significance as the first report of an extended distribution to Central Tamil Nadu. Since this species is less know it is described in the Eastern Ghats. A brief description with, photographs, phenological data, current nomenclature, notes on distribution and relevant notes are provided for the easy of the taxa in the field and all the voucher specimens are deposited in the Department of Botany, St. Joseph's College (Autonomous), Tiruchirappalli, Tamil Nadu.

Taxonomy Treatment

Pseuderanthemum malabaricum [4], *Eranthemum malabaricum* Clarke in Hook. f. Fl. Brit. India 4: 497. 1884.

Herb or under shrub up to 50 cm high. Branchlets terete, glabrous. Leaves simple, opposite, ovate, elliptic-lanceolate 3.5 – 7.5 x 4.4 – 5.5 cm, cuneate at base, entire at margin, acute-acuminate at apex, glabrous, c. 5-lateral nerves; petiole attenuate at base. Inflorescences spikes terminal, up to 15 cm long. Flowers c. 5 cm long. White; bracts linear - labceolate; bracteoles small, subulate - linear. Calyx 5-lobed; lobes ovate-elliptic, unequal. Corolla-tube narrowly cylindric, 2 cm long; limb ovate-elliptic, flat, unequal. Stamens 2, clavate, staminodes 2; anther 2-celled, equal. Ovary ellipsoid, 2-celled, glabrous. capsules oblong, cylindric, 2-lobed at apex; seeds 3-4, ovate-orbicular, rugose, glabrous.

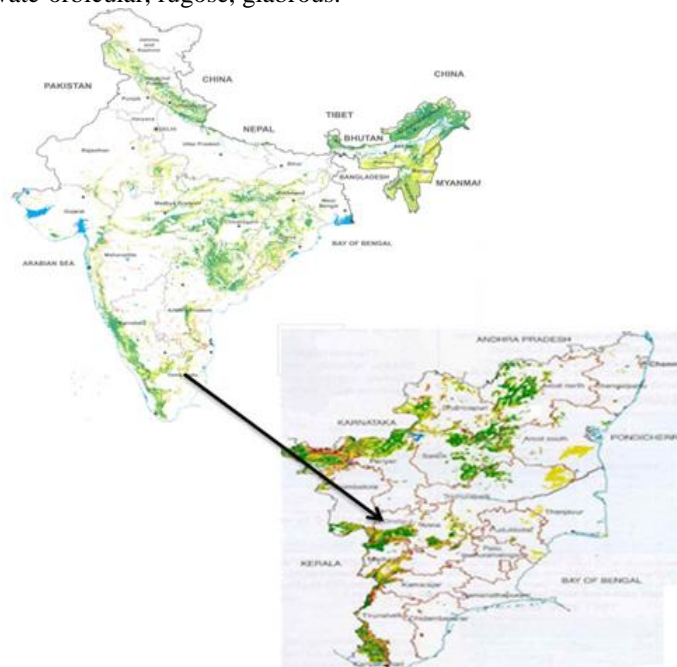


Figure1. Location of *P. malabaricum* in Karanthamalai hills of Dindigul District in Tamil Nadu

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Distribution: Peninsular India; Tamil Nadu; Dindigul district of Eastern Ghats

Flowering and Fruiting: August – January

Specimens examined: Eastern Ghats: Dindigul District: Karanthamalai 500m, 22-11 -2014, SJCBOT 1088, SJCBOT1099, Dhatchanamoorthy. N

Note: This species is now under heavy biotic pressure and it is doubtful whether the existing population will continue to survive in those localities for the few plants. This wild plant is well suited for slop of the shady places and it can be conserved through in-situ conservation and additional knowledge on the distribution of species is gathered at regional level.



Figure 2. Photographs of the first report taxa - Pseuderanthemum malabaricum Gamble

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