PHYLLANTHUS RANGACHARIARII
A NEW SPECIES OF EUPHORBIAEACE FROM AGASTHIYAMALAI, INDIA
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During a plant exploration tour in the eastern slopes of the Agasthiyamalai Biosphere Reserve of Tamil Nadu, the authors collected an interesting Phyllanthus L. (Euphorbiaceae) from the Papanasam hills, Tirunelveli district, Tamil Nadu. Critical examination of these specimens and perusal of relevant literature (Hooker, 1887; Trimen, 1898; Gamble, 1925; Grady, 1997; Chakrabarty & Balakrishnan, 2007) revealed that it is a novelty, closely allied to Phyllanthus heyneanus Muell.Arg. This new species is described and illustrated here.

Phyllanthus rangachariarrii C. Murugan, K.A.A. Kabeer & G.V.S. Murthy sp. nov. (Fig.1)

Phyllanthus heyneanus Muell. Arg. affinis, sed foliis coriaceis, margine recurvatis, non glaucis; nervis lateralium 4 – 5-jugis; sepalis marium orbicularis, apice rotundis; filis base connatis, apice libris; stylis reflexis; fructibus sessilibus et seminibus glabris differt.

Type: India: Tamil Nadu, Tirunelveli district, Papanasam hills, near Nagapodavu, 09 Oct. 2004, c. 900 m, C. Murugan & K.A.A. Kabeer 119102 (Holotype, CAL; Isotypes, MH); Kanyakumari (Tinnevelly) district, Mahendragiri hills, 17 Sep. 1916, K. Rangacharir 13152 (Paratype, MH).

Monococcious shrub, to 2 m high, entirely glabrous; branches terete, 3 – 5 mm thick, smooth, greenish; leaf bearing branchlets 8 – 15 cm long, c. 1 mm thick, spreading, jointed and terete towards base, flattened towards apex, ultimately deciduous. Leaves on main stem reduced to scales, those on leaf bearing branches well developed, 15 – 60, distichous; lamina stiff, oblong, oblique, 5 – 10 x 2 – 5 mm, inequilaterally acute at base, entire, recurved at margins, acute at apex, coriaceous, not glaucous below; midrib slender, flat above, raised beneath; lateral nerves 4 – 5 pairs, distant, faint; tertiary nerves obscure; petioles 1 – 2 mm long, shallowly channeled above; stipules lanceolate, peltate, 2 – 3 x 0.2 – 0.3 mm, broad at base, acuminate at apex, persistent. Inflorescence axillary glomerules on leaf-bearing branches; male cymes at proximal axils, 2 – 3 flowered; female cymes at distal axils, 1-flowered; bracts linear to filiform, c. 1 mm long, entire. Male flowers c. 4 mm across, creamy-white, withering after pollination; pedicels 3 – 4 mm long, filiform, thickened towards apex; sepals 4(2+2), orbicular, c. 2 x 2 mm, 1 veined, entire along margins; disk glands 4, alternate to sepals, reniform, < 0.5 mm; stamens 4, opposite to sepals; filaments connate below into a slender c. 0.5 mm long column, free above into 4 connectives to c. 0.25 mm long; anthers in a ring, 1-loculed, mucituous, rounded at apex, dehisce horizontally. Female flowers c. 6 mm across, creamy-white; pedicels c. 1 cm long, thickened towards apex; sepals 6(3+3), oblong, 3 – 4 x 1.5 – 2 mm, entire at margins, obtusely acute at apex, persistent; disc annular, cupular, thin, pulvinate; ovary globose, 3-loculed, c. 2 mm, smooth, ovules 2 in each locule, collateral; styles 3, deeply 2-fid, to 3 mm long, reflexed; stigmas simple, acute at apex. Capsules depressed-globose, c. 4 mm, sessile, smooth, with persistent calyx; fruiting pedicels to 12 mm long; seeds 6, triquetrous, c. 2.5 x 1 mm, glabrous.

Fl. & Fr.: September October.

Distribution: India (Tamil Nadu- Agasthiyamalai), rare.

Habitat: Evergreen forests, c. 900 m altitude.

Date of Publication: 15 September, 2009
Fig.1. *Phyllanthus rangachariaritt* C. Murugan, K.A.A. Kabeer & G.V.S. Murthy:
A. Twig; B. Leaf; C. Stipule; D. Male flower; E. Sepal; F. Disc gland; G. Stamens; H. Female flower;
M. Fruit; N. Seed (A - N drawn from C. Murugan & K.A.A. Kabeer 119102)
Etymology: The specific epithet is in honour of K. Rangachariar, a very well-known Indian Botanist.

Note: The new species is closely allied to *Phyllanthus heyneanus* Muell. Arg. but can be distinguished from it by the characters given in Table-1.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leaves</td>
<td>chartaceous, glaucous beneath, flat along margins; lateral nerves 6-11 pairs</td>
<td>coriaceous, not glaucous beneath, recurred along margins; lateral nerves 4-5 pairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male sepals</td>
<td>elliptic-oblong, acute to obtuse at apex</td>
<td>orbicular, rounded at apex</td>
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<tr>
<td>Filaments</td>
<td>connate throughout</td>
<td>connate below and free above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style</td>
<td>erect</td>
<td>reflexed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fruits</td>
<td>stipitate</td>
<td>sessile</td>
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<tr>
<td>Seeds</td>
<td>hairy</td>
<td>glabrous</td>
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors wish to thank Dr. M. Sanjappa, Director, Botanical Survey of India, Kolkata for facilities; Dr. N.P. Balakrishnan, formerly Joint Director, Botanical Survey of India, Southern Circle for confirming the novelty; Dr. V.J. Nair, Emeritus Scientist, Botanical Survey of India, Southern Circle for Latin diagnosis and critically going through the manuscript; the Ministry of Environment and Forests, New Delhi for the financial support; the Chief Wildlife Warden, Chennai for the permission for field work and Mr. H. Sankar (XCH), Palayamkottai for his meticulous effort in making a neat illustration.

REFERENCES


