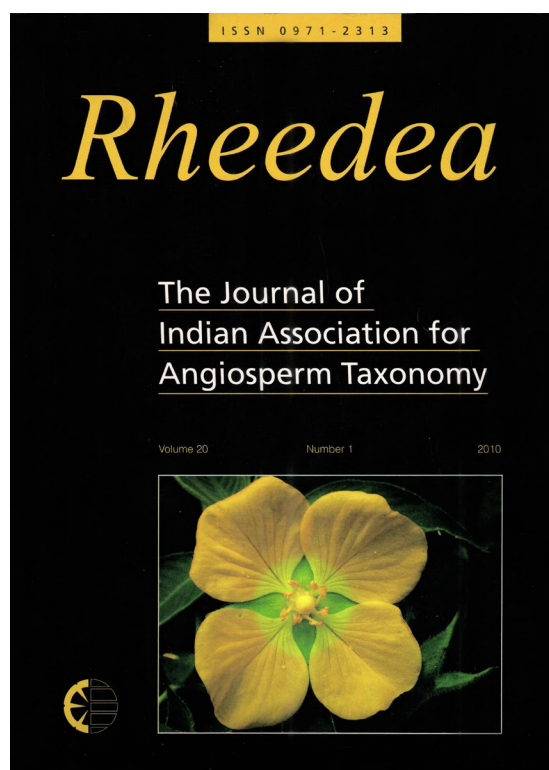




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Cyanotis racemosa (Commelinaceae), a new record for India

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Abstract

Cyanotis racemosa B. Heyne ex Hassk. is earlier known only from Sri Lanka is recorded for the first time from India. A detailed description with an illustration of the species is provided here.

Keywords: *Cyanotis racemosa*, India, New Record

Introduction

Cyanotis D. Don a paleotropical genus represented by c. 50 species with rich diversity in Asia and Africa (Faden, 2000; Mabberley, 2008). Karthikeyan *et al.* (1989) listed 16 species and 3 varieties from India. While revising *Cyanotis* (Comelinaceae) for India, the authors have collected specimens of a species of this genus from Tamil Nadu. On critical examination and perusal of literature, it was identified as *C. racemosa* B. Heyne ex Hassk. So far it is known to occur only in Sri Lanka. The present collection, therefore, forms a new distributional record for India. Apart, several collections of this species in various Indian herbaria have been misidentified and filed under *C. villosa* (Spreng.) Schult. were observed. Detailed description, illustration and relevant notes are provided to facilitate its easy identification.

Cyanotis racemosa B. Heyne ex Hassk., *Comelin. Ind.*: 125. 1870; Faden in *Dassanayake, Rev. Handb. Ceylon* 14: 132. 2000. – Type: Sri Lanka, *Thwaites s.n.* in C.P. 2332 (B!, K!). *C. villosa* sensu Hook.f. in *Trimen, Handb. Fl. Ceylon* 4: 313. 1898, non (Spreng.) Schult.f. 1830. **Fig. 1**

Herb, procumbent or trailing, perennial, rooting at lower nodes; roots fibrous, thin. Shoots much branched; internodes glabrous but with a dense line of pubescence below the fused edge of the sheath. Leaves distichous, sessile; sheaths to 1.5 cm long, densely sericeous or pilose; mouth long ciliate; lamina strongly discolourous, lanceolate, 3.7 – 9.5 × 0.8 – 1.8 cm, cuneate at base, appressed ciliate at margins, acuminate at apex, glabrous and lustrous bright green above, densely appressed

sericeous and green or maroon below. Inflorescences clustered at the ends of shoots, composed of 4 or 5-stalked cincinni; stalk c. 1 cm long; bracts

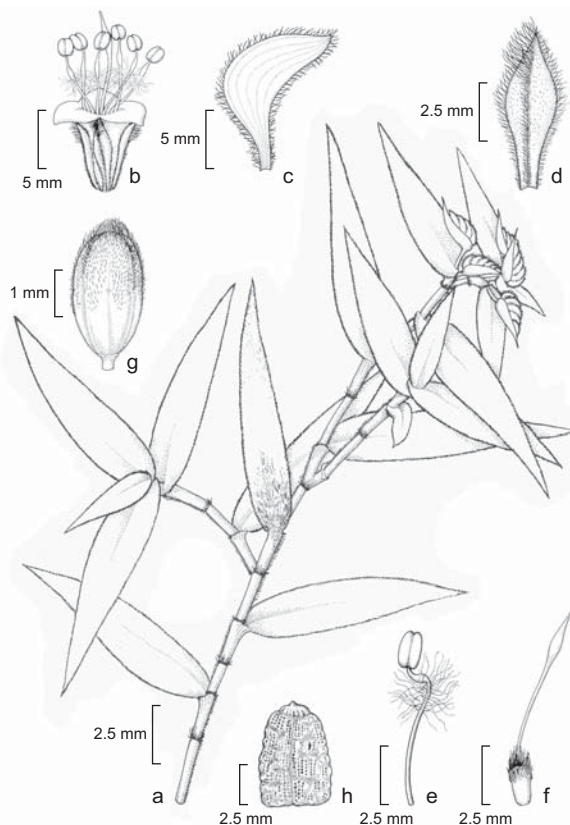


Fig. 1. *Cyanotis racemosa* B. Heyne ex Hassk.: a. Flowering twig; b. Flower; c. Bracteole; d. Sepal; e. Stamen; f. Gynoecium; g. Fruit; h. Seed [Drawn from *Joby Paul & Nampy 77* (DEV) by Manudev].

ovate-lanceolate, slightly exceeding the cincinnus, entire, ciliate at margins, glabrous; bracteoles ovate to lanceolate, falcate, ciliate at margins, acuminate at apex, glabrous. Flowers bisexual. Sepals 3, oblanceolate, acuminate at apex, pilose along the keel, especially towards apex and margin below, glabrous above. Petals 3, acute at apex, united for $\frac{1}{2}$ their length from base, white. Stamens 6, exceeding the corolla by 6 – 8 mm; filaments swollen subapically, densely bearded; hairs pale violet or blue, white-tipped; anthers yellow. Ovary oblongoid, densely tomentose at apex; style equaling or exceeding the stamens, glabrous with a fusiform subapical swelling. Capsules 2.5 – 3 x 2 – 3 mm, puberulous at apex, constricted at middle, 3-lobed; two locules with 2 seeds, one with 1 seed. Seeds ovoid to ovoid-ellipsoid, 1.3 – 2.5 x 1.1 – 1.5 mm; testa striate, pitted, pale to dark brown.

Flowering & Fruiting: December – March.

Habitat: Evergreen forest, moist localities near waterfalls, 2200 m.

Distribution: India and Sri Lanka. India: Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu.

Specimens examined: INDIA, **Karnataka**, *s. loc.*, R.H. Beddome *s.n.* (MH). **Kerala**, Kottayam district, Lockhart gap, 1675 m, 23.1.1964, K.M. Sebastine 18406 (MH). **Tamil Nadu**, Dindigul district, *s. loc.*, July 1884, *s. coll. s.n.*; Bear shola, 13.6.1897, Bourne 408 (MH); Palni Hills, 1829 m, 1.3.1960, C.J. Saldanha 5055, 5056 (BLAT); Nilgiri district, Pakasuramalai, 2000 m, 28.3.1958, K.M. Sebastine 5662; Tirunelveli district, Naterikal to Sengaltheri, 6.3.1917, *s. coll.* 14525; *s. loc.*, 7.3.1917, *s. coll.* 14539 (MH); Kodaikanal, Tiger shola, 1950 m, 24.3.2002, Joby Paul & Santhosh Nampy 77 (DEV).

Note: One of the most distinctive species of *Cyanotis* with its strongly discolourous leaves and usually sessile to short pedunculate inflorescences at the ends of shoots.

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