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How to cite:

Tiwari U. & K. Ravikumar 2013. Neotypification of *Lepidagathis bandraensis* (Acanthaceae). *Rheedea* 23(2): 105-107. https://dx.doi.org/10.22244/rheedea.2013.23.02.05

*Received*: 14.06.2013 *Published in print*: 31.12.2013 Revised and accepted: 01.12.2013 Published Online: 31.12.2013



**Published by Indian Association for Angiosperm Taxonomy** This volume of Rheedea is published with partial financial assistance from Department of Science and Technology, Government of India, New Delhi



## Neotypification of *Lepidagathis bandraensis* (Acanthaceae)

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#### Abstract

A neotype is designated here for *Lepidagathis bandraensis* Blatt. (Acanthaceae). Besides, this species is reported here as a new distributional record to flora of Gujarat.

Keywords: Lepidagathis, Neotype, Gujarat, New record

#### Introduction

During a botanical visit to Gujarat, a species of *Lepidagathis* was collected and after critical study with the protolouge and other relevant literature, it has been confirmed as *L. bandraensis*. The typification of *Lepidagathis bandraensis* Blatt. is confusing, in the absence of any original material. The authors searched in vain all the Indian herbaria (CAL, BSI, BLAT) where Blatter's collections were reportedly located.

Willdenow (1800) established the genus Lepidagathis to include a single species, L. cristata. Lepidagathis bandraensis was first reported by Blatter and Hallberg (1919) as L. trinervis from Jodhpur (Kailana 9128, 9127; Bhikamkor 9126) growing on rocks with the following remarks, "In naming this plant we have followed Cooke, although our plants do not exactly matching with his plant description. There are also differences between our specimens and the description of Hook.f., Fl. Brit. India. Until more materials are available we retain the above name". Certainly the specimens quoted above do not agree completely with the description of L. trinervis given either by Hooker (1885) or Cooke (1908). Instead the descriptions of the plant exactly match to L. bandraensis Blatt. based on Santapau's key (1952) and more or less matching with the description provided by Blatter for this species.

Blatter (1930) described the species as "A prostrate herb, woody below, branched from the root; root very stout; branches slender, creeping up to 25 cm long, glabrous, thickened at nodes, acutely quadrangular (almost with wings which are green). Leaves opposite, sessile, linear-lanceolate, acute, obscurely undulate, all over with short, stiff, stout hairs, especially on the margin and on the nerves beneath, midrib depressed above, very prominent beneath, side nerves 5-6 on each side. Inflorescence consisting of a semiglobose, very dense mass just above the root, 5 cm dia. (the spike cannot be clearly distinguished and they are not disagreeable to touch). Bract 1, spathulate, herbaceous, 10 by 3 mm, apex rounded, very long hairy all over. Bracteoles 2, the larger 10 mm long, 3 mm broad". It is flowering during October - November.

The specimen referred and cited by Bhandari (1978), viz., JODHPUR: 210,1387 and Puri 218521 did not warrant type status, as these specimens were not cited by the original author (Blatter) in the protologue, to consider them as syntypes. Bhandari (1978) himself mistakenly stated in his book entitled, "The Flora of Indian Desert" on p.307, as "The type material of Blatter's specimen is, however, not preserved in Blatter Herbarium and could not be examined". In fact, in the protologue of Lepidagathis bandraensis Blatt. (J. Proc. Asiat. Soc. Bengal 26:339 - 366. 1931) has included only one collection by Hallberg 74501; as type, made from Bandra, near Bombay, which should be treated as Holotype (McNeill & Turland, 2011; ICN Art. 9.1 Note 1). A thorough search for the specimens at BSI went futile revealing the fact that the specimens are either destroyed or missing and the specimens of Blatter's collection are represented in the form of a stick devoid of leaves and flowers (Curator, BLAT, pers. comm.). After strenuous search it is understood that the type specimens are missing and therefore based on the synopsis of proposals on Botanical Nomenclature by MeNeill & Turland

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(2011), neotypification for *Lepidagathis bandraensis* is proposed here. As there is neither a representative specimen at any of the Indian herbaria nor a report in any of the earlier published literature (Shah, 1978; Bole & Pathak, 1988) from Gujarat, it is reported here as a new record to the flora of the state. Lepidagathis bandraensis Blatt., J. Proc. Asiat. Soc. Bengal 26: 347. 1931.

Neotype (designated here): INDIA, Gujarat, Coastal regions of Madhavpur, Porbander, 21°34′30.9″ N – 69°39′51.9″ E, 2 m, 22.10.2012, *U. Tiwari* 114890 (FRLH). Fig. 1



Fig. 1. Neotype of *Lepidagathis bandraensis* Blatt. *U. Tiwari* 114890 (FRLH).

*L. trinervis sensu* Blatt. & Hallb., J. Bombay Nat. Hist. Soc. 26: 812. 1919, *non* Nees 1832.

*Ecology*: Only 4 individuals of this species were recorded. It occurs along the sandy beaches of Porbander, Gujarat. The associated species are *Cyperus conglomeratus* Rottb, *Dipteracanthus prostratus* (Poir.) Nees, *Geissaspis cristata* Wight & Arn., *Heliotropium bacciferum* Forssk., *Lotus garcinii* DC., *Launaea nudicaulis* (L.) Hook.f. and *Sericostoma pauciflorum* Stocks.

*Distribution*: India (Maharashtra, Rajasthan and reported herein from Gujarat). Endemic.

#### Acknowledgements

The authors are thankful to the Director, FRLHT, for the facilities and Shri D.K. Ved, IFS (Retd.), FRLHT, Advisor, for constant support and encouragements; the Ministry of Environment & Forests, Govt. of India, New Delhi, for the financial support under CoE project. Thanks are also due to the Officer in-charge of Botanical Survey of India, Western Regional Centre, Pune and Arid Zone Regional Centre, Jodhpur; Curator of BLAT, for help in providing the information on the type specimens.

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Received: 14.06.2013 Revised and Accepted: 01.12.2013