

## The Flora of Central and North Tamil Nadu

Britto S.J., 2019

Published by The Rapinat Herbarium, St. Joseph's College (Autonomous), Tiruchirappalli (India). Hardbound.

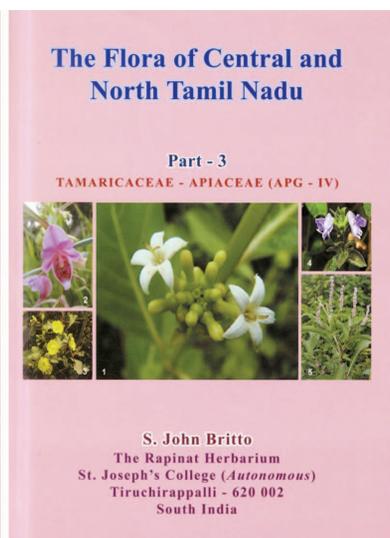
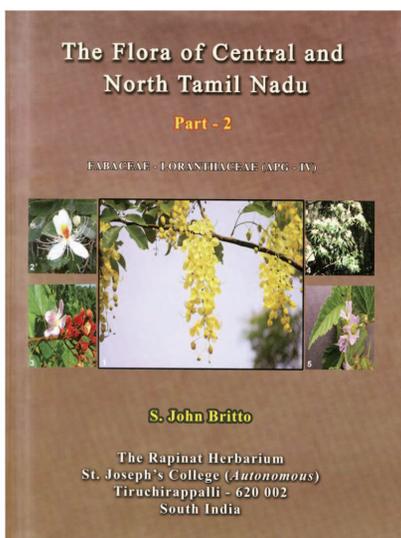
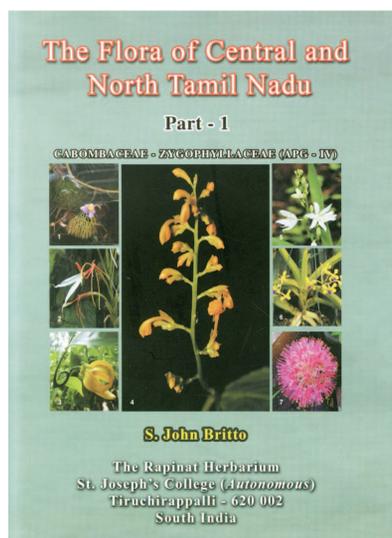
Part – 1 Cabombaceae – Zygophyllaceae (APG – IV). ISBN: 978-93-87360-34-1. Pages: xcii + 624. Price: ₹ 500; \$ 45; £ 35; € 40.

Part – 2 Fabaceae – Loranthaceae (APG – IV). ISBN: 978-93-87360-38-9. Pages: iv + 888. Price: ₹ 500; \$ 45; £ 35; € 40.

Part – 3 Tamaricaceae – Umbelliferae (APG – IV). ISBN: 978-93-87360-42-6. Pages: xx + 842; photo plates 6. Price: ₹ 500; \$ 45; £ 35; € 40.

The Flora of Central and North Tamil Nadu is a thoroughly reworked, revised and updated version of the earlier illustrated “The Flora of Tamilnadu Carnatic” published by late Fr. K.M. Matthew as a 4-part series (1981, 1982, 1983, 1988). This new Flora has not only reassessed the earlier tract of study that comprised the four former districts of Tiruchirappalli, Salem, Dharmapuri and South Arcot, but has in addition the northern districts of Tamil Nadu, reaching up to the border of Andhra Pradesh. Therefore, the present Flora of Central and North Tamil Nadu besides being a reassessment of the central region with the inclusion of all the districts up to the northern boundary of Tamil Nadu, has incorporated the floristics of the Coromandel Coast of Tamil Nadu (the delta districts of river Cauvery). Thus the core objective of the present Flora is not only a fresh assessment of the vegetation since the completion of the previous Flora of Tamilnadu Carnatic but also

extends the area of study to all the districts of northern Tamil Nadu, except the evergreen tracts. The included districts are Ariyalur, Chennai, Cuddalore, Dharmapuri, Erode, Kanchipuram, Karur, Krishnagiri, Nagapattinam, Namakkal, Perambalur, Puducherry including Karaikal (Union Territory), Pudukkottai, Salem, Thanjavur, Tiruchirappalli, Tiruvallur, Tiruvannamalai, Tiruvarur, Vellore and Viluppuram. Two significant aspects in this Flora are the Tribal belts in the northern districts, especially the inclusion of the Javadi and Yelagiri hills and a notable extension of the study area to the Coromandel Coast, which was explored separately in order to assess the impact of heavy and rapid industrialisation along the entire coast from Nagapattinam to Pulicat, off Chennai. The eventual combined total area of study of **The Flora of Central and North Tamil Nadu** is 63,2777 km<sup>2</sup> that is nearly 50% of the area of Tamil Nadu State.



This Flora is dedicated to St. Joseph's College, Tiruchirappalli as it has completed 175 glorious years (1844–2019). Fr. (Dr.) S. John Britto is a well-known Indian botanist, who also actively served as the Principal, Secretary and Rector of St. Joseph's College at different periods from 1988 to 2017.

This Flora follows the APG IV system of classification so as to be on par with the current global trends in floristics. A total of 3,193 taxa [including 2390 native, 135 naturalised, 356 cultivated and 312 garden taxa] belonging to 1,298 genera under 190 families have been dealt in this Flora. **Part 1 of the Flora** consists of the introductory chapter, which is divided into three parts namely 1. State of Tamil Nadu, which provides information on the present Flora, followed by location, physiography, climate, geology and soil, area and population, hill ranges, major rivers, vegetation and forest types, especially the Tropical Dry Evergreen Forest of central and northern districts of Tamil Nadu and Remote Sensing, for assessment of vegetation type; 2. Plant Explorations in Tamil Nadu covers the early botanical history, the present exploration, tribal communities and their indigenous knowledge, field tour report, overview of the central and northern Tamil Nadu taxa and phytogeographical significance of the flora and 3. The Present Flora includes format and conventions, floristics of the Coromandel Coast, vegetation of the Ennore–Pulicat Sector, APG IV Classification, family sequence, novelties and first reports and key to the families.

In the Systematic treatment, **Part 1** covers 62 families [Cabombaceae to Zygophyllaceae]; **Part 2** of the Flora covers 63 families [Fabaceae – Loranthaceae] and **Part 3** covers 63 families [Tamaricaceae – Umbelliferae]; this part also includes report on the field trips and plates, additional data, additions, deletions and changes in the key to families, genera and species, indexes to scientific names, English and Tamil names, references, addenda, corrigenda and emendanda.

Key to the families is given following APG IV. For each family, circumscription is given, followed by

key to the genera. For each genus, original citation is given along with circumscription. Key to species is given under each genus, and for each enlisted species, the author provides the correct botanical name, synonym(s), literature citation, followed by Common English/Tamil name(s) wherever available, description, habitat/ecology, phenology, specimens examined and distribution in India. Indented key is followed throughout. Updated nomenclature has been followed by scanning articles in various journals, revisions, monographs and Floras. Besides, international databases such as International Plant Names Index, World Checklist of Selected Plant Families, Catalogue of Life, Tropicos, Plants of the World Online, etc. were consulted.

The Flora of Central and North Tamil Nadu is a comprehensive consolidation of plant wealth of the region, and is well-presented. However, in a work of such magnitude, one might expect things that have escaped the attention of author; a few are mentioned here. There is discrepancy in the total number of seed plant families dealt in the Flora; on the cover the given number is 190, whereas under contents only 188 family names have been listed. Author should have avoided inclusion of databases such as Catalogue of Life (COL), World Checklist of Selected Plant Families (WCSP) under bibliographic/nomenclatural citations as they devoid of page numbers. The genus name with complete bibliographic citation is missing for **Cabomba** (p. 1), after the family circumscription. Author has mentioned that the genus circumscription for monotypic genera is omitted, but it looks like the author has not provided genus circumscription for genera those are represented in this Flora with only one taxon, in fact those genera are not monotypic! Though, Dr. Britto majorly used the abbreviations or standard forms of authors' of plant names after Brummitt (on p. xli, the name Brummitt, R.K., is wrongly spelled as Brummit, RX) & Powell (1992), in certain cases the names of editors / authors of books are also given in the same style, for instance: L. Cramer in Dassan. & Fosb. RHFC (p. 1959), it should have been "L.H. Cramer in Dassanayake & Fosberg". Similarly, the

author should have also followed some uniform pattern while citing the names of editors / authors of books, because some names appeared with initials and some without initials and font style also sometimes in regular or italics. Names of authors / editors of books are given in different ways, few examples: "Nicolson" and "Nicolson, D.H."; "Cramer", "L. Cramer" and "L.H. Cramer"; some of the abbreviations of titles of books / periodicals are also not standardized correctly, for instance: "Enum. Pl." as "Enum." (p. 126); "Ess. Agrostogr." as "Essai Agrost." (p. 498); "Fl. Hongk." as "Fl. Hong."; "Compan. Bot. Mag." as "Comp. Bot. Mag." (p. 2002); "Contr. Bot. India" as "Contrib." (p. 2264).

There are also spelling and typographic errors, some examples: *Bryonia* as *Bronia* (p. 1021); *Andrographis ceylanica* Nees Hook. (p. 2003; Hook. should have been avoided); *Aphelandra pulcherrima* (Jacq.) Kunth HBK (p. 2007; HBK represents names of three botanists, Humboldt, Bonpland and Kunth, however, names of new taxa are attributed only to Kunth). The recommended abbreviation for subspecies by the Code is "subsp." instead the author has consistently used 'ssp.'. The Latin word "nomen" is abbreviated as "nom.", however, in this Flora "nom" (without a period) is used constantly. The bibliographic citation of *Andrographis longipedunculata* (Sreem.) L.H. Cramer, Kew Bull.

51(3): 555. 1996" is invalid; the correct citation is *Andrographis longipedunculata* (Sreem.) L.H. Cramer ex Karthik., Sanjappa & Moorthy, Fl. Pl. India 1: 3. 2009. Author should have used "Northern Tamil Nadu" instead of "North Tamil Nadu" in the title of the Flora, which should have been more appropriate and correct. Inclusion of new discoveries and new reports from Northern and Central Tamil Nadu during the past decade would have made the floristic account complete and comprehensive.

Nonetheless, this is a wonderful book, which will provide extremely good information to every researcher interested in Flora of Tamil Nadu, especially the drier parts of central and northern districts of the state. We congratulate the author for bringing out this comprehensively consolidated Flora of the Central and North Tamil Nadu at a reasonable price and strongly recommend this publication to botanists, biologists, ecologists and taxonomists in academic and research institutes, who directly or indirectly carry research interests in the flowering plants of India.

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