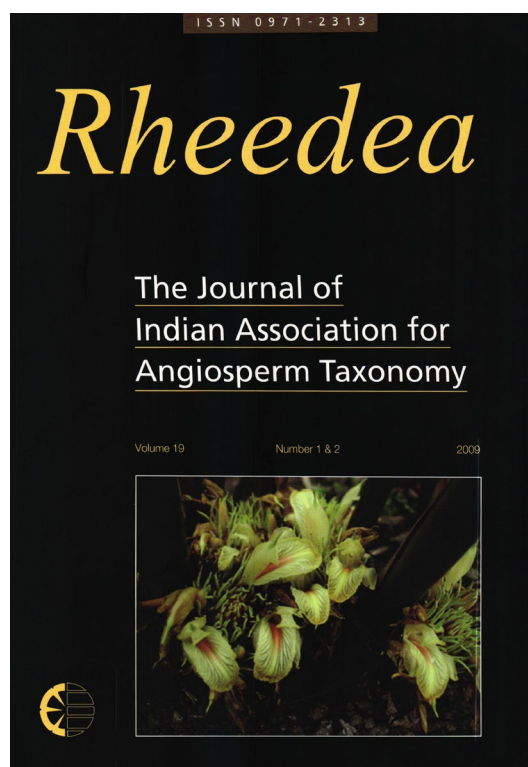




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New Reports to the Flora of India from Saddle Peak National Park, North Andaman

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Abstract

Scolopia pusilla (Gaertn.) Willd. (Flacourtiaceae) and *Cleistanthus robustus* Muell.-Arg. (Euphorbiaceae) from the Saddle Peak National Park, North Andaman, forms new additions to the flora of India.

Keywords: North Andaman, Saddle Peak, New Reports

Introduction

The Andaman & Nicobar archipelago represents an arcuate festoon of Islands situated 1200 km off the south-eastern coast of India in the Bay of Bengal stretching from Myanmar in north to Sumatra in south. These Islands are situated between 6°45' and 13°41' N latitudes and 92°12' and 93°57' E longitudes with a total geographical area of 8,249 km². The Islands have developed luxuriant tropical lowland rain forest, owing to tropical, hot, humid and ever-wet conditions. There are 106 Protected Areas in the Andaman & Nicobar Islands including nine National Parks, 96 Wildlife Sanctuaries and one Biosphere Reserve. The Saddle Peak National Park located in the North Andaman Island harbours unique stunted ever-green vegetation that is found only in restricted localities of the Andaman Islands. Saddle Peak is the highest peak of the entire archipelago reaching an altitude of 732 m (Rao, 1986).

During the floristic inventorisation of Saddle Peak National Park, two species namely *Scolopia pusilla* (Gaertn.) Willd. and *Cleistanthus robustus* Muell.-Arg. were collected which form first reports for the Indian flora. The specimens were critically examined and compared with the specimens at PBL, CAL, MH. Scrutiny of literature (Rao, 1986; Mathew, 1998; Balakrishnan & Chakrabarty, 2007) revealed that they were hitherto unreported from this archipelago as well as from mainland India. *Scolopia pusilla* and *Cleistanthus robustus* were earlier considered to be endemic to Sri Lanka and their present collection reveals their extended

distribution. Detailed descriptions along with illustrations are provided for these two species to facilitate easy identification and future studies.

Scolopia pusilla (Gaertn.) Willd., Sp. Pl. 2(2): 981. 1799; Sleumer in Blumea 20: 37. 1972; Verdc. in Das-san., Rev. Handb. Fl. Ceylon 10: 212. 1996. *Limonia pusilla* Gaertn., Fruct. Sem. Pl. 1: 279, t. 58, f. 279. 1789. *Phoberos gaertneri* Thwaites, Enum. Pl. Zeyl.: 17. 1858. *Scolopia gaertneri* (Thwaites) Thwaites, Enum. Pl. Zeyl.: 400. 1864; Hook.f., Fl. Brit. India 1: 191. 1872.

Fig. 1

Small trees, up to 3 m high. Leaves broadly elliptic-ovate, 2.5 – 4.5 × 1.5 – 3 cm, obtuse at apex, entire to slightly crenate, obtuse to rounded at base, 3 – 5-nerved at base. Racemes sub-terminal, 2 – 4 cm long, 4 – 8-flowered. Flowers c. 1 cm across, white with purple tinge at base. Sepals ovate-oblong, 1.2 – 1.5 × 1 – 1.2 mm. Petals oblong, 1.2 – 2.5 × 0.5 – 0.7 mm, ciliate along margins, white. Disc glands present; receptacle hairy. Stamens many; filaments 2.5 – 3 mm long, exerted. Ovary glabrous; style 6 – 7 mm long; stigma 4-lobed, fimbriate.

Flowering: January – March.

Habitat: Rare; in bamboo brakes.

Distribution: India (Saddle Peak, Andaman Islands) and Sri Lanka.

Specimen Examined: INDIA, **Andaman & Nicobar Islands**, North Andaman, Saddle Peak National Park, Saddle Peak hill, 600 – 700 m, 6.2.2000, R. Sumathi 4739 (PBL, MCCH).

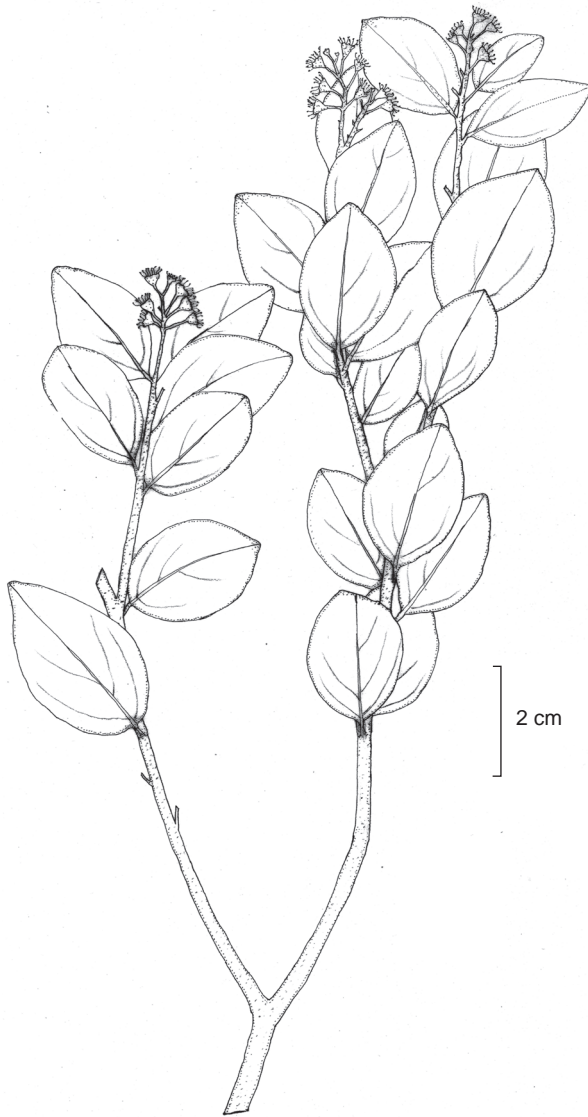


Figure 1. *Scolopia pusilla* (Gaertn.) Willd.: a flowering twig.

Note: This species is characteristic of having coriaceous leaves with rounded base. Flowers with many exerted stamens. It is closely related to *Scolopia crassipes* Clos, but distinguished from it by having 4 – 8-flowered, glabrous inflorescence and flowers with slender pedicels, whereas in *S. crassipes* inflorescence is grey-pubescent, few-flowered and flowers with stout pedicels. *S. pusilla* is so far known only from Sri Lanka and its present collection from Saddle Peak National Park extends its phytogeographical distribution from Indian region to Indochinese region.

Cleistanthus robustus Muell.-Arg. in DC., Prodr. 15(2): 504. 1866; Hook.f., Fl. Brit. India 5: 279. 1887; Chakrab. *et al.* in J. Econ. Taxon. Bot. 26(2): 343. 2002.

Fig. 2

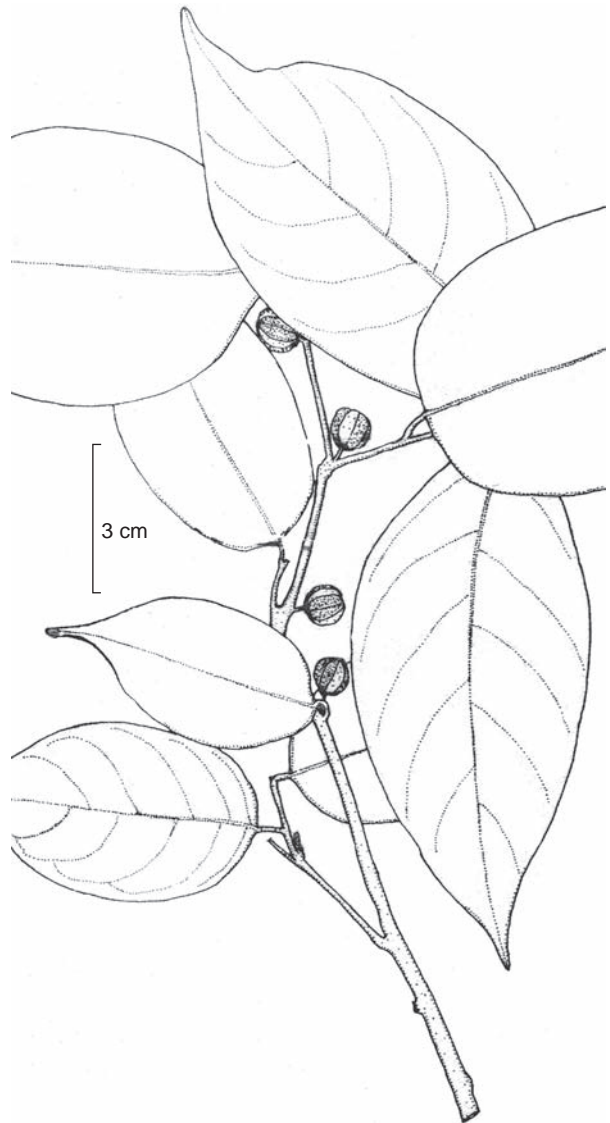


Figure 2. *Cleistanthus robustus* Muell.-Arg.: a fruiting twig.

Shrubs, 3 – 4 m high. Leaves ovate to ovate-elliptic to ovate-lanceolate, 4 – 15 × 2 – 7 cm, obtuse to truncate or rounded at base, entire, caudate-acuminate or at times obtuse at apex; lateral nerves 4 – 7 pairs; petioles 3 – 8 mm long. Female flowers axillary or extra-axillary, solitary, *c.* 3 mm across. Sepals 5, ovate-lanceolate, 2.5 – 3 × 1 – 1.2 mm, sericeous outside, glabrous inside, clasping to the ovary at base. Petals obovate, 2 – 3 × 1 – 1.5 mm, truncate with a notch at apex. Ovary densely sericeous, *c.* 1.5 mm across; style *c.* 1 mm long; stigma bifid. Disc annular. Capsules subsessile, *c.* 6 × 8 mm, deeply 3-lobed, sparsely puberulous, black.

Flowering & Fruiting: March – June.

Habitat: Rare; in moist deciduous forests.

Distribution: India (Kalpong, Andaman Islands) and Sri Lanka.

Specimen Examined: INDIA, **Andaman & Nicobar Islands**, North Andaman, Saddle Peak National Park, Kalpong hills, 500 – 600 m, 9.4.2001, R. Sumathi 4708 (PBL, MCCH).

Note: This species is allied to *C. patulus* (Roxb.) Muell.-Arg. but can be distinguished by the glabrous branchlets and thickly coriaceous leaves. In *C. patulus* the branchlets are rufous-velutinous and leaves are thinly coriaceous to thinly chartaceous.

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