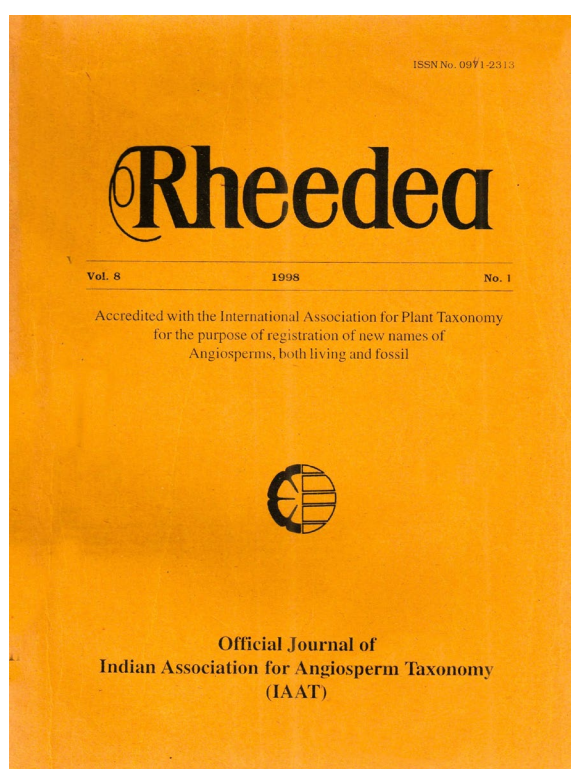




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A New species of *Scirpus* L. (Cyperaceae) from the Deccan Plateau, India

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Abstract

A new species of *Scirpus* L., viz. *S. naikianus* is described from Maharashtra state, India.

INTRODUCTION

Recent exploration of Marathwada region on the Deccan plateau in Maharashtra state in India yielded few interesting taxa of flowering plants. The present report describes one such species of Cyperaceae collected from the marshy areas near the Amdari tank in Bhokar taluka of Nanded district. The tank occupies a position at the foot of surrounding hills. The vicinity of tank harbours quite a good number of herbaceous species of the type found in semi-aquatic habitat. It is interesting to note that the occurrence of the present species is confined only towards the northern side of the tank amongst the grasses.

Scirpus naikianus Wadood Khan, *sp. nov.* (Fig. 1).

Species distincta ad sectioni *Schoenoplectus* Rchb. generis *Scirpus* L. (*s.l.*) pertinent et nulli alii sectionis similis.

Scirpus wallichii Nees similis sed differt a inflorescentia semper prope basin caulium, parviore (ca 2 mm longa); glumis cymbiformis; apicibus antherarum papillis; nucibus laevibus sine setae hypogynae. Atque *S. lateriflorus* Gmel. similis sed differt inflorescentia basibus, nucibus biconvexis, laevibus.

Types: India, Maharashtra state, Nanded Dist., (Bhokar Taluka), Amdari, *Wadood Khan 2158a* (Holotype); *ibid.*, *Wadood Khan 2158 b,c,d* - (Isotypes). (Deposited in the Herbarium of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Marathwada University, Aurangabad).

Densely tufted annuals, 10-30 cm tall; stem terete, 1-2 mm wide, ribbed, deeply grooved to one side. Leaves-sheaths herbaceous, glabrous; blades of the first sterile leaves thin, 4-5 mm wide, flat, ultimately deciduous, those of the stems reduced to sheaths. Inflorescence

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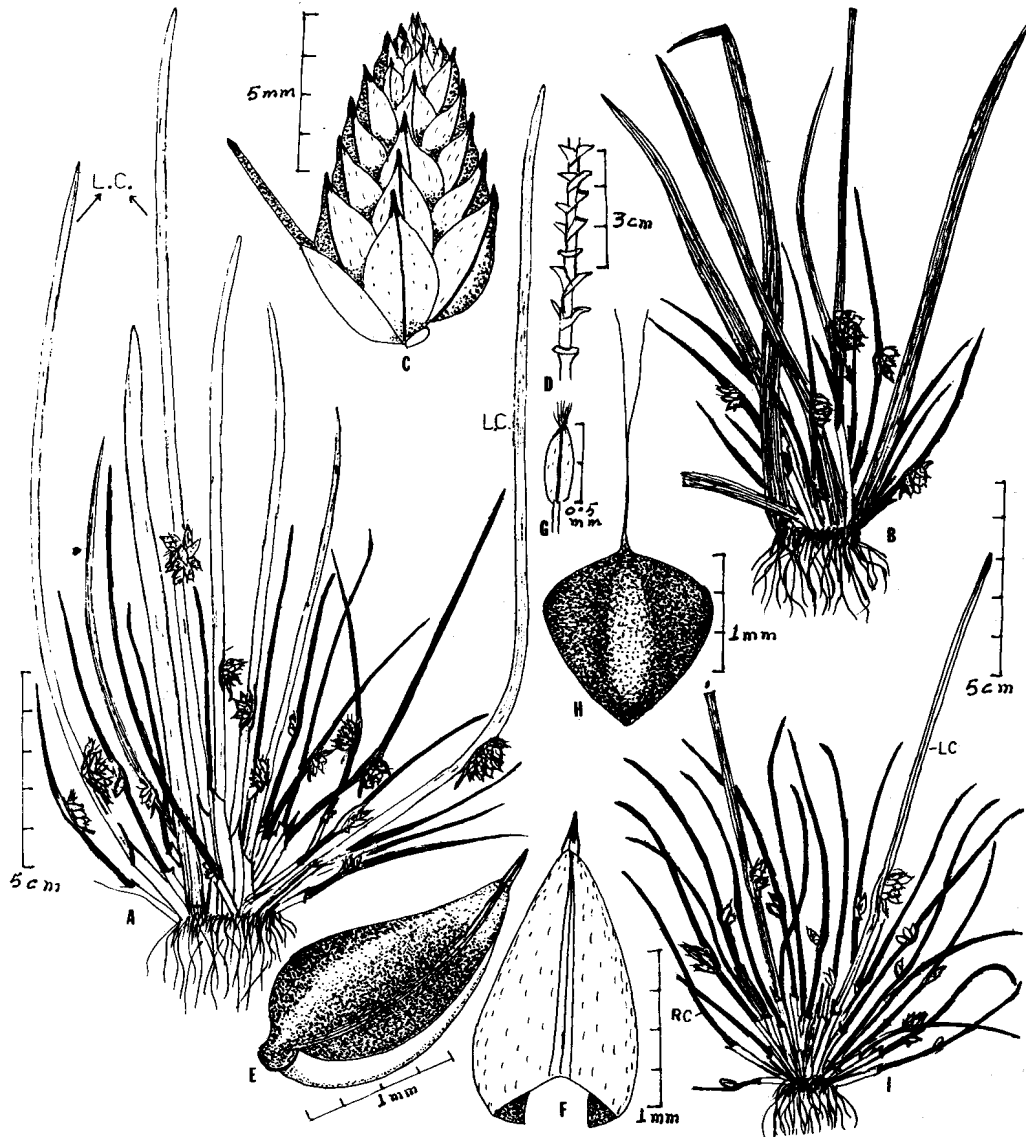


Fig. 1. *Scirpus naikianus* Wadood Khan. A. Habitat showing dimorphic culms (shorter ones in dark) and reducing leaves; B. Juvenile phase with well-developed sterile leaves; C. Spikelet; D. Rhachilla; E, F. Glumes; G. Anther with papillose tip; H. Nut with bifid style; I. Plant showing reduced leaves (R.L.), and longer culms (L.C.).

A new species of *Scirpus* (Cyperaceae)

pseudolateral, sessile, capitate with clusters of 2-10 spikelets near the base of stems. Involucral bracts solitary, stem like, much longer than and looking like the continuation of stems. Spikelets ellipsoid, 8-10 x 2.5-3 mm, angular, sessile or subsessile, greenish to stramineous, tinged with brown, acute or subacute; rachilla wingless, very rigid, often with thick scars of persistent bases of the glumes. Glumes ovate, 1.8-2 x 1.5-1.7 mm, closely imbricated, spiral, boat-shaped, carinate with a strong 3-nerved keel; sides nerveless, hyaline, tinged with brown along the keel with *ca* 0.3 mm long mucro. Stamens 2, anthers elliptic *ca* 0.5 mm long with papillose appendage at the tips. Hypogynous bristles or scales totally absent. Nuts biconvex, broadly obovoid or almost suborbicular, 1-1.3 mm across, raised dorsally in the middle, flat or concave on ventral side, smooth, yellowish to chestnut-brown, shining, apiculate. Styles 2-fid, glabrous, much shorter than the nuts.

Habitat: Marshes along the margins of tank with dimorphic culms; rare.

Flowering and Fruiting: December to January.

Etymology: This species is named after Dr. V.N. Naik, formerly Reader in Botany, Dr. B.A.M. University, Aurangabad for his great many contributions to the field of taxonomy and for consistent encouragements received from him during my studies.

It is a distinct species belonging to the section *Schoenoplectus* Rchb. of the genus *Scirpus* L. (*s.l.*). It is not amply similar to any of the hitherto known species of this section.

Similar to *Scirpus wallichii* Nees, but differing in having the inflorescence always near the base of the stems, smaller (*ca* 2 mm long) boat-shaped glumes, papillose anther tips and the smooth nuts without hypogynous bristles. It also resembles *S. lateriflorus* Gmel. but differs in having basal inflorescence and biconvex, smooth nuts.

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