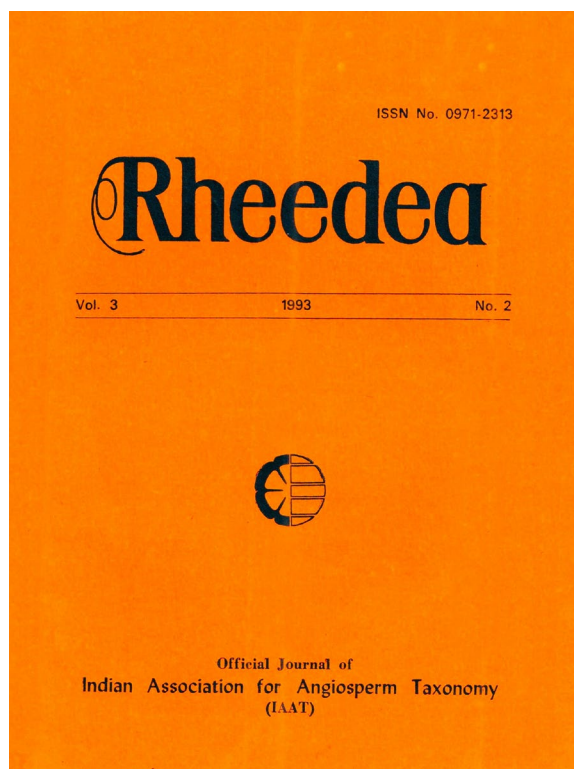




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How to cite:

Koshy K.C. & P. Pushpangadan 1993. On the occurrence of *Eriocaulon minimum* Lam. in India. *Rheedia* 3(2): 117–119.

<https://dx.doi.org/10.22244/rheedia.1993.03.02.04>

Published in print: 31.12.1993

Published Online: 01.01.2022

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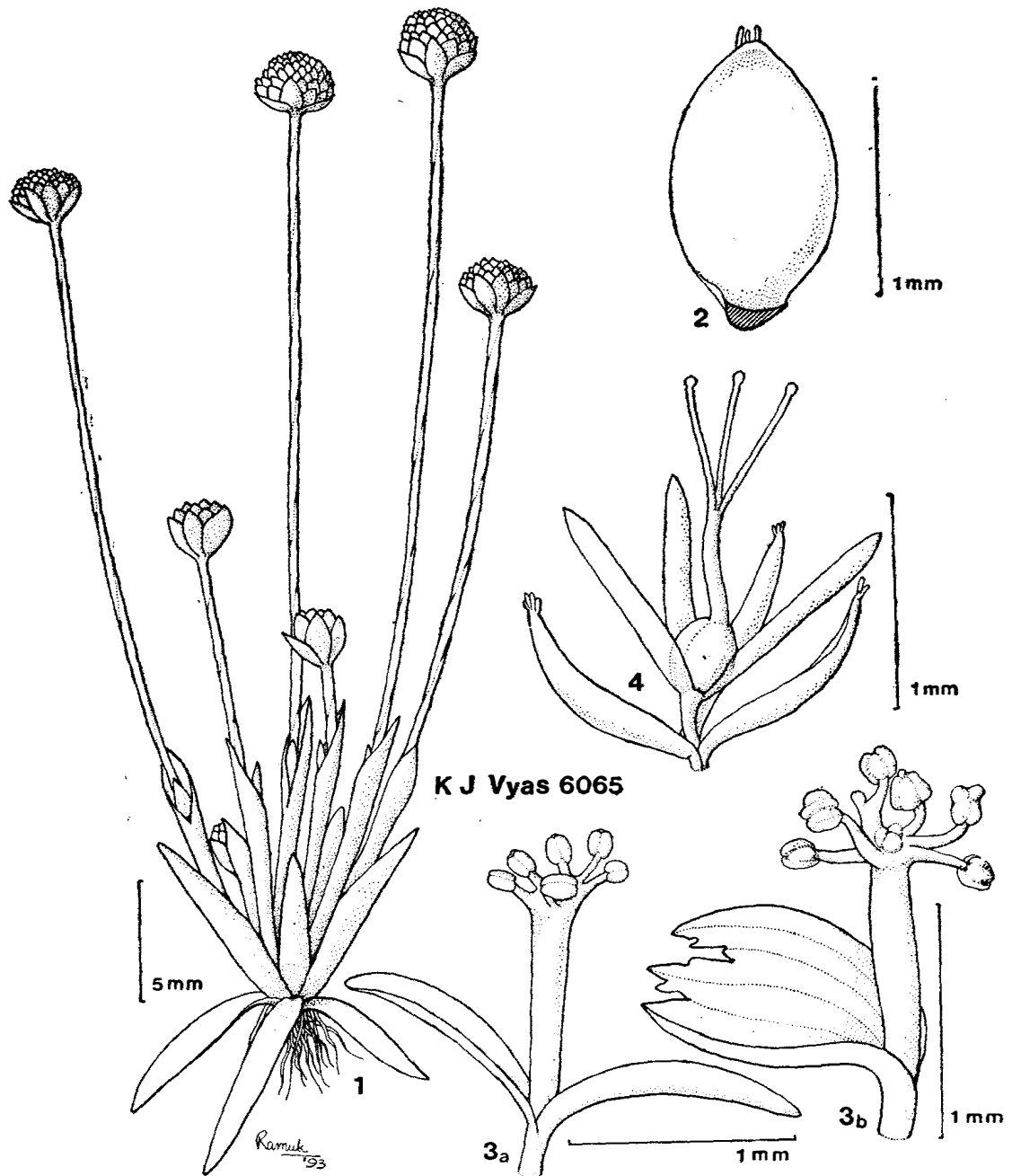
Abstract

Eriocaulon minimum Lam. is an "imperfectly known" species in Indian flora. Most authors seem to have included it in their treatises on the authority of Lamarck without seeing the actual material. We have located this species from Gujarat. Complete description and illustration of the species is provided here.

Eriocaulon minimum Lam. (Eriocaulaceae) is a little known species and its occurrence in India was considered doubtful as no specific locality is recorded for this taxon from the country. This species was originally described by Lamarck (1789) based on a specimen of Sonnerat from India, without precise locality. J. D. Hooker (1893) included this species under "imperfectly known species". Ruhland (1903) did not see a specimen of this species and hence treated it under "*imperfecte cognita*" (fide Fyson, 1922). In his work *The Indian Species of Eriocaulon*, Fyson (*J. c.*) treated *E. minimum* Lam. under "species not seen or identified by me". Hajra (1985) in his enumeration of the Indian species of the genus, has given West Bengal as the locality of this species, but unlike in the case of most other species listed, he has not cited any specimen under this species, possibly because he too did not see any material of the species from India. Though Karthikeyan *et al.* (1989) listed this taxon as occurring in India they did not mention anything about the locality. Apart from above notes no report exists regarding the precise location of this species within India.

While studying the Eriocaulaceae specimens housed in the Herbarium of the Department of Biosciences, Sardar Patel University, Gujarat, one of us (KCK) found two unidentified sheets of this rare species. The identity of these two specimens was later confirmed by Dr. H. N. Moldenke. This interesting collection, thus confirms the occurrence of this species in India and records Broach in Gujarat state as the first known locality for this taxon within the country. Incidentally, this is a new record for the erstwhile Bombay Presidency.

Koerniche (1856) placed this species closest to *E. truncatum* Ham. and suggested that *E. minimum* Lam. is a form of the latter. Fyson (*J. c.*) also agreed with this view. However, J. D. Hooker (*J. c.*) preferred *E. sieboldianum* Sieb. & Zucc. (= *E. cinereum* R. Br.) as its probable nearest ally. These three species can be separated by the following key.



Figures 1-4: *Eriocaulon minimum* Lam. 1. Habit; 2. Floral bract (Glume)-Ventral view; 3a & 3b. Male florets; 4. Female floret.

- 1a. Anthers white.....*E. cinereum*
 b. Anthers black..... 2
 2a. Petals absent in male florets; plants comparatively smaller (3.5–4.3cm)
*E. minimum*
 b. Petals three in male florets; plants comparatively larger (7–15 cm).....
*E. truncatum*

Eriocaulon minimum Lam., Tabl. Encycl. 1: 213. 1792; Spreng. in L., Syst. Veg. ed. 16, 3: 776. 1826; Hook. f., Fl. Brit. India 6: 585. 1893; Fyson, J. Ind. Bot. 3: 17. 1922; Moldenke, Phytologia 18: 308. 1969; Karthikeyan *et. al.* Fl. Ind. Enum. Monocot. 78. 1989.

Slender tufted herbs reaching upto 4.3 cm. Leaves 6–13 × 0.6–1 mm, linear or lanceolate, cuspidate at apex, reaching less than 1/3 of scapes, blades shorter than sheaths. Scapes 3–8, 1–3.7 cm long, slender, twisted, 4-ribbed. Heads 0.25–0.4 cm across, black. Involucral bracts straw-coloured, 2–2.5 × 0.5–0.75 mm, oblong, obtuse at apex, glabrous. Glumes 1.5–1.75 × 0.5 mm, obovate-oblong, glabrous or sparsely white hairy at tip outside. Male florets: sepals usually 2, rarely one, falcate or spathaceous, 0.75–1.25 × 0.5–0.75 mm; petals 0; stamens 6, anthers black. Female florets: sepals 3, subequal with 2 long and one short, longer sepals ca. 1.5 mm long, dark, linear-oblong, shorter sepal ca. 1 mm long, narrowly linear. Petals 3, 1 mm long, all similar, hyaline, linear-oblong, flat. Nut ovoid, ca. 0.25 mm long, transversely faintly lined.

Exsiccata: Gujarat: Broach, 20 November 1972, K. J. Vyas 6065 (now in TBGT; duplicate in Moldenke Herbarium).

Collector's note: 'Rare, only a few plants were found on wet river bed'.

Acknowledgements

This work was carried out under the supervision of the late Prof. G. L. Shah, Department of Biosciences, Sardar Patel University, Gujarat and we are grateful to him. We thank Dr. H. N. Moldenke, Plainfield, New Jersey, for confirming the identity of the species, Mr K. P. Pradeepkumar for illustrations and Prof. Fred Rickson, Botany Department, Oregon State University, U. S. A. for comments on the manuscript.

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