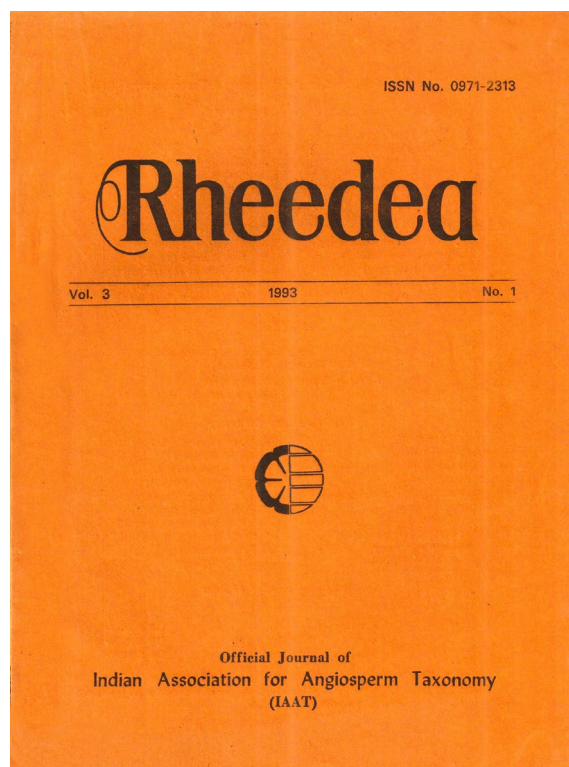




The *Entada* Adans. (Mimosaceae) puzzle

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SHORT COMMUNICATION

The *Entada* Adans. (Mimosaceae) puzzle

In 1980 (Notes on Ceylonese plants I, Miscellaneous papers, Landbouwhogeschool, Wageningen 19:223-227) I have tried to disentangle the confused nomenclature of the genus *Entada* Adans. (nom. cons.), but for lack of proper flowering and fruiting material, could not arrive at a definite conclusion, which may only be reached, when Indian botanists collect adequate flowering and fruiting material.

The general trend now is to accept a single species of *Entada* in the Indian Peninsula, described by Rheede van Draakestein (Hort. Mal. 8:59) and considered to be conspecific with *Entada pusaetha* DC., of Sri Lanka. This is not proved and Indian botanists are invited to pursue this matter.

In Sri Lanka two species of *Entada* occur, one *E. pusaetha* DC., an enormous liana with a straight, enormous pod, up to 1m long and very large, round, compressed, conspicuous seeds, up to 10cm diameter. The specific name is derived from Hermann's Museum Zeylanicum, the Catalogue of the Hermann collection of plants in the Natural History Museum, London. There is no herbarium specimen of this plant in Hermann's herbarium and Linnaeus, hence, included it in his Flora Zeylanica of 1747 under the "Barbarae annihilatae" (plants with a local name, but without herbarium material).

In Sinhala language, *Pus* (pronounce 'poos'), means hollow and *aetha* (Sinhalese : *Etta*) means seed; apparently Hermann was only acquainted with the seeds. The plant is called in Sinhalese: *Pus wael* (*wael*: climber). De Candolle called it 'pursætha', manifesting a typographical error.

In Sri Lanka another species occurs, called in Sinhala: *Heen pus wael* (*heen* = small), a much smaller liana, with a pod only half the size of that of *E. pusaetha* and with the apical part bent and partly twisted (not straight as in *E. pusaetha*), the seeds not more than 3—4 cm in diameter. I have described it as *E. zeylanica* in the paper quoted above (page 226). *E. zeylanica* is found in other areas than *E. pusaetha*. I found it in the forest park above the city of Kandy, where I could study it at leisure. The pods have always the same shape. The small seeds have puzzled Ceylonese botanists for a long time; they were familiar only with the large seeds of *E. pusaetha*.

The question is now: what is the identity of *E. monostachya* DC. (a synonym of *E. rheedii* Sprengel, Syst. veg. 2:335. Jan.-May 1825)?

It might be *E. pusaetha* DC. with the long straight pods and the large seeds or *E. zeylanica* with the short, partly bent and twisted pods and small seeds.

At any rate, Nielsen (Fl. Thailand 4:144. 1985) is in error, when he described the pods of *E. rheedii* as having either straight or curved pods. The size of the seeds (3—4 cm diam.) as described by him, points to *E. zeylanica* Kosterm.

I wrote this article in context with a note of A. S. Reddy in the Journal of the Bombay natural History Society 87(1): 170-171. (1990).

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