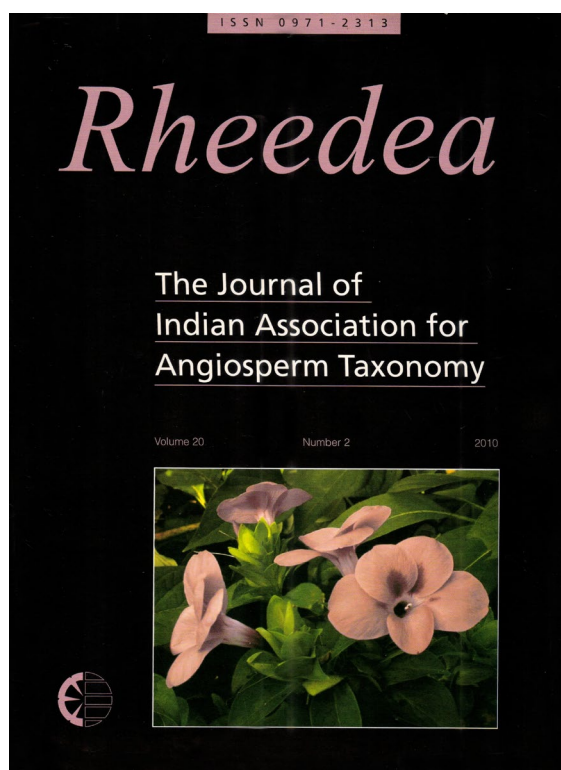




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Stemona curtisii (Stemonaceae) – A New Record for India from the Bay Islands, Little Nicobar

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Abstract

Stemona curtisii Hook.f. (Stemonaceae), so far recorded from Sri Lanka, Thailand and Malesia is reported here as a new record for India from the Bay Islands, Little Nicobar. A brief description with illustrations and photographs are provided here.

Keywords: Bay Islands, India, New Record, Stemonaceae, *Stemona curtisii*

Introduction

The family Stemonaceae is represented by 3 genera, namely *Stemona* Lour., *Stichoneuron* Hook.f. and *Croomia* Torr. Of which *Stemona* Lour. and *Stichoneuron* Hook.f. are distributed from Indomalesia to East Asia and tropical Australia. The genus *Stemona* comprises of c. 20 species (Mabberley, 2008) of which only one species, *S. tuberosa* Lour. is reported to occur in Indian mainland. It is represented by two varieties, viz., *S. tuberosa* Lour. var. *tuberosa* and *S. tuberosa* Lour. var. *minor* (Hook.f.) C.E.C. Fisch. (Karthikeyan *et al.*, 1989).

During the botanical explorations in the Little Nicobar, the author has collected specimens of *Stemona*, which after critical studies and perusal of literature, have been identified as *S. curtisii* Hook.f. This species was described by Hooker (1892) based on a collection from Penang by Curtis. It was known to occur only in Sri Lanka, Thailand and Malesia. The present collection from the Bay Islands, Little Nicobar is a new record for India and it also forms a family and generic record for the Andaman & Nicobar Islands. A brief description with illustrations and photographs are provided here to facilitate easy identification and further collection of this species from similar habitats in adjacent areas.

Stemona curtisii Hook.f., Fl. Brit. India 6: 298. 1892; Curtis, Bot. Mag. 48: t. 7254. 1892; Duyfjes, Fl. Malesiana 11(2): 403. 1993; Wadhwa & Weerasooriya in Dassanayake, Rev. Handb. Fl. Ceylon 10: 384. 1996. *Roxburghia gloriosoides* Roxb. var. *minor* Thwaites, Enum. Pl. Zeyl.: 432. 1864.

Stemona tuberosa Lour. var. *minor* (Thwaites) Trimen, Syst. Cat.: 94. 1885. *S. minor* (Thwaites) Hook.f., Fl. Brit. India 6: 298. 1892, p.p.; Trimen, Handb. Fl. Ceylon 4: 281. 1898. *S. tuberosa* sensu Ridley, Mat. Fl. Mal. Penins. 2: 86. 1907, non Lour., 1790. **Fig. 1,2**

Twinner, glabrous; roots tuberous, in clusters, 10–5 cm long. Leaves alternate, elliptic-ovate, 5–15 × 5–12 cm, cordate or truncate at base, entire at margins, acuminate at apex, membranous, 7–13-veined at base; petioles 2–7 cm long. Raceme axillary, to 10 cm long; peduncle 5–8 cm long. Flowers c. 2 cm across, greenish white; pedicels c. 5 mm long; bracts ovate, c. 6 × 1.5 mm, persistent. Tepals 4, lanceolate, c. 2.5 × 0.5 cm, rounded at base, entire at margins, acuminate at apex, greenish white with purple veins. Stamens 4, erect, purple; filaments 2–3 mm long; anthers linear-lanceoid, c. 2.5 cm long, acuminate at apex, brown, 2-loculed. Ovary oblongoid, c. 1.5 × 1 mm, 1-loculed; ovules 3 to many; style c. 1.5 mm long; stigma obtusely acute at apex, minutely papillose. Capsules ovoid, c. 3 × 1 cm, with persistent tepals; seeds few, c. 16 × 2.5 mm, acuminate at apex, arillate.

Flowering & Fruiting: October – April.

Habitat: In shade; along streams in evergreen forests.

Distribution: Malesia, Sri Lanka, Thailand and now in India.

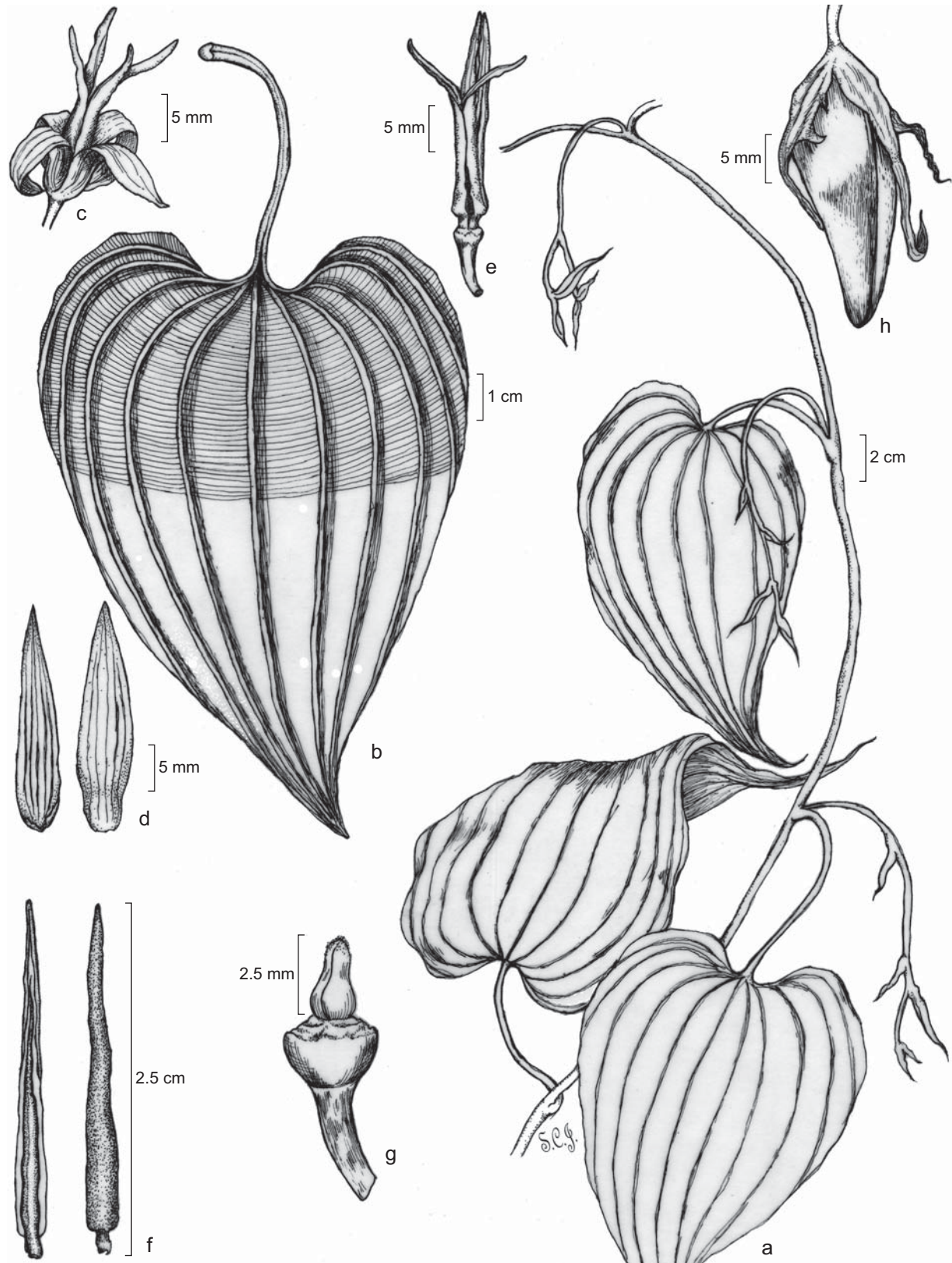


Fig. 1. *Stemona curtisii* Hook.f.: a. Twig; b. Leaf; c. Flower; d. Tepals; e. Androecium; f. Stamens; g. Ovary with pedicel; h. Capsule with persistent tepals.

Specimens examined: INDIA, **Andaman & Nicobar Islands**, South Nicobars, Little Nicobar, Pulomilo, c. 100 m, 23.3.2009, C. Murugan 26823; Pulopanja, c. 20 m, 31.10.2009, C. Murugan 27823; Pulopanja

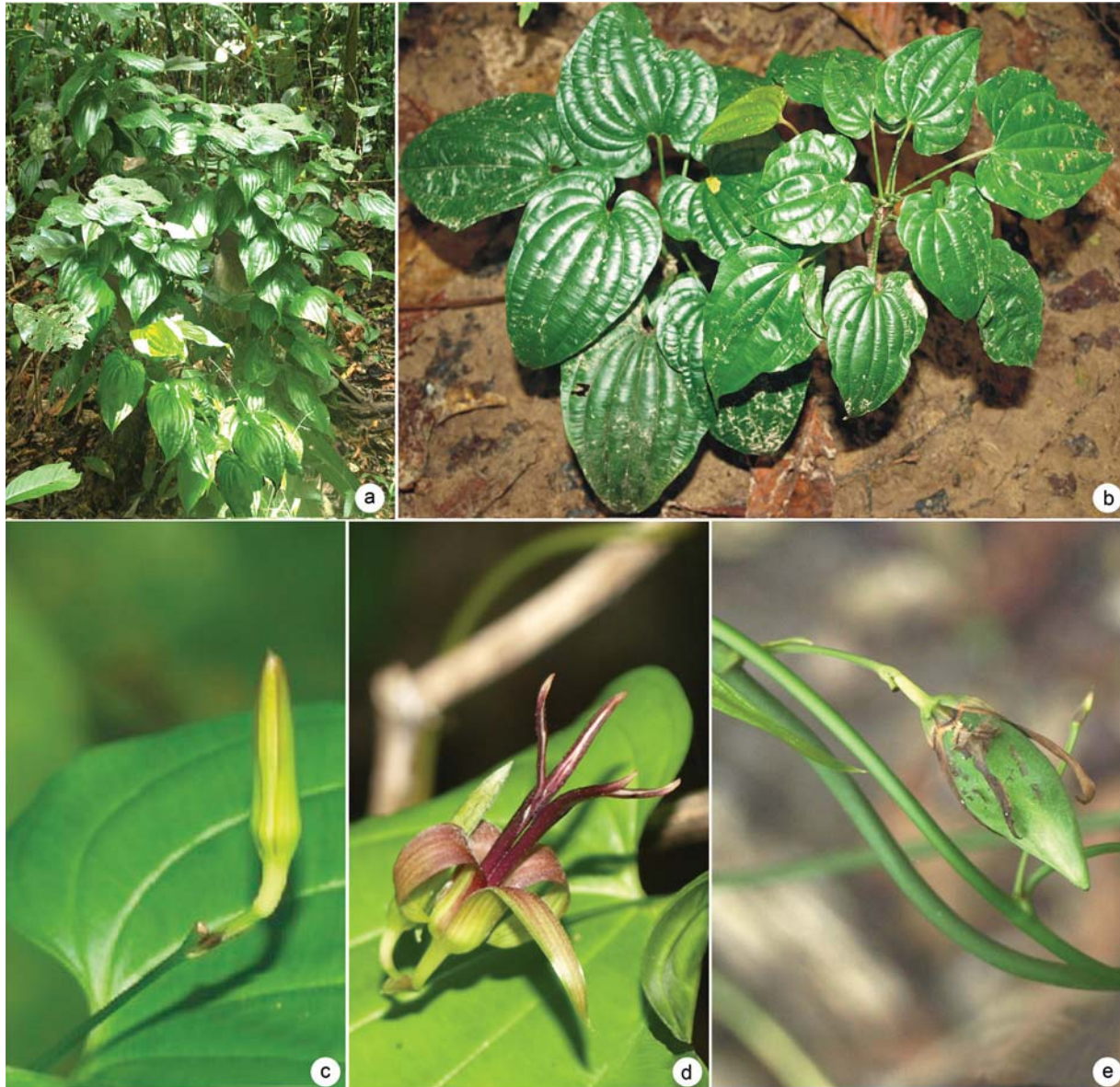


Fig. 2. *Stemonon curtisii* Hook.f.: a. Habit; b. Plantlets in garden; c. Flower bud; d. Flower; e. Fruit

to Tengu, 1.11.2009, c. 10 m, C. Murugan 27848; School Point, c. 10 m, 3.11.2009, C. Murugan 27886; Pulopanja, stream side, c. 50 m, 12.4.2010, C. Murugan 28125; Anula, c. 10 m, 14.4.2010, C. Murugan 28158 (PBL). PENANG, Waterfall, s. die, Curtis 1522 (Holotype, photo!, K).

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