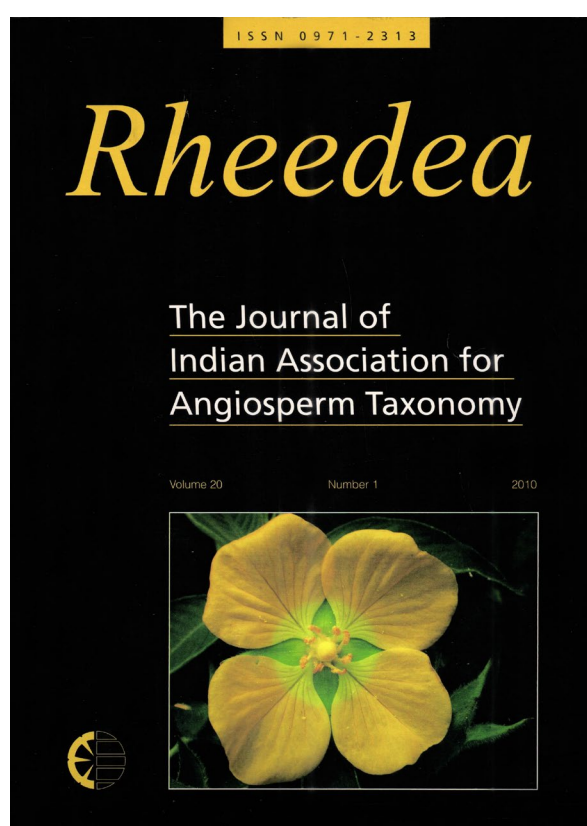




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## *Syzygium claviflorum* (Myrtaceae) – A new record for South India

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### Abstract

*Syzygium claviflorum* (Roxb.) Wall. ex A.M. Cowan et Cowan, a Myrtaceous tree species is reported for the first time for South India from Agasthyamalai Biosphere Reserve of the southern Western Ghats. A brief description and illustration of the species are provided herewith for easy identification.

**Keywords:** Myrtaceae, New record, South India, *Syzygium claviflorum*

### Introduction

While inventorying the wild edible fruits of Kerala, the first author collected a tree species of *Syzygium* Gaertn. (Myrtaceae), with edible fruits at first from Ponmudi hills and later on from Chemunji hills of Agasthyamalai Biosphere Reserve of Kerala state. On critical examination with relevant literature (Hooker, 1879; Parnell & Chantaranonthai, 2002; Chen & Craven, 2007) it was identified as *Syzygium claviflorum* (Roxb.) Wall. ex A.M. Cowan et Cowan.

*Syzygium claviflorum* is a handsome evergreen tree species reported from Indomalaysian subkingdom and NE Australian region. In India, it is reported only from Northeast India (Sikkim and Khasia hills) and Andaman & Nicobar Islands and its report from Kerala hence form a new distributional record for South India. It is described with illustration to facilitate its easy identification.

***Syzygium claviflorum*** (Roxb.) Wall. ex A.M. Cowan et Cowan, Trees N. Bengal: 67. 1929; Chen & Craven, Fl. China 13: 349. 2007. *Eugenia claviflora* Roxb., Fl. Ind. ed. 2, : 488. 1832. *E. leptantha* Wight, Icon. Pl. Ind. Orient.: t. 528. 1842. *Syzygium leptanthum* (Wight) Nied. in Engler & Prantl, Nat. Pflanzenfam. 3(7): 85. 1893. *Acmenosperma claviflorum* (Roxb.) Kausel, Ark. Bot. Ser. 2, 3: 609. 1957. **Fig. 1**

Evergreen trees, to 15 m tall; trunk straight; bark slightly fissured, longitudinally scaly, grey-brown or creamy brown; branchlets slender; twigs terete or slightly compressed. Leaves opposite, oblong-lanceolate to lanceolate, 3.5 – 7 × 1 – 2.6 cm, cuneate at base, revolute, entire or undulate at margin; acuminate to caudate-acuminate at apex

(acumen to 1 cm long), subcoriaceous; midrib slender, channeled above and raised below; lateral nerves numerous, slender, compact, looping at margin; intramarginal nerve slender, indistinct, c. 1 mm from margin; petioles 3 – 7 mm long, slender, channeled above. Inflorescence axillary, terminal or from the leaf scars, 2.5 – 6.7 cm long, lax, trichotomously branched; peduncles slender, 0.5 – 1.5 cm long; bracts caducous. Flowers sessile, white. Calyx tube funnel-shaped, 1.5 – 1.8 cm long, tapering towards base, punctate; mouth 3 – 5 mm across; lobes 4, to 1 × 2 mm, rounded or subacute at apex. Petals 4 – 7, suborbicular, to 2 × 2.5 mm, calyptrate, punctate, early caducous. Stamens numerous, to 7 mm long. Ovary 2-loculed; style c. 8 mm long; stigma simple; ovules numerous, on axile placenta. Berry ellipsoid to urceolate, 1 – 1.3 × 0.6 – 0.8 cm, purple when ripe; seed 1, ovoid, to 9 × 5 mm, depressed at distal end.

*Flowering & Fruiting:* March – May.

*Habitat & Ecology:* It is a common species seen along the streamsides of the evergreen forests in Chemunji hills and in the exposed rocky areas of evergreen forests in Ponmudi. The associated species in both the localities are *Phaeanthus malabaricus* Bedd., *Syzygium gardneri* Thwaites, *S. lanceolatum* (Lam.) Wight et Arn., *S. munronii* (Wight) N.P. Balakr., *Elaeocarpus serratus* var. *weibelii* Zmartyz and *Aporosa acuminata* Thwaites.

*Distribution:* Australia, Bangladesh, China, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Papua New Guinea, Thailand and Vietnam.

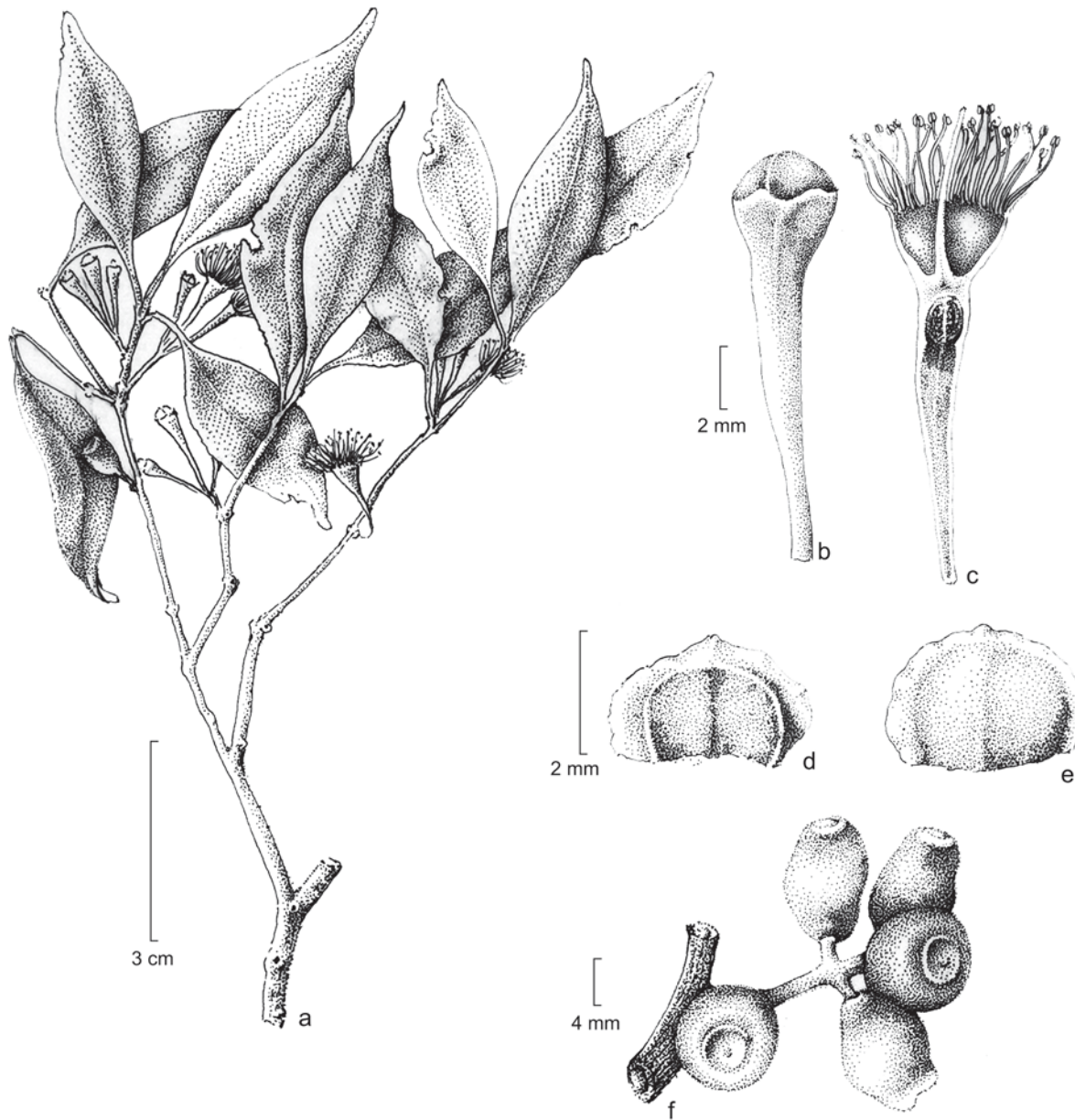


Fig. 1. *Syzygium claviflorum* (Roxb.) Wall. ex A.M. Cowan et Cowan: a. A twig; b. Flower bud; c. L.S. of flower; d, e. Petal, ventral and dorsal views; f. An infructescence.

*Specimens examined:* INDIA, **Kerala**, Thiruvananthapuram district, Ponnudi, 1950 m, 20.3.2009, S.M. Shareef 62716; Chemunji hills, 1200 m, 12.5.2009, S.M. Shareef 62717 (TBGT).

*Notes:* *Syzygium claviflorum* is more or less similar to *S. lanceolatum* in its crown shape and foliage. However, the former can be distinguished by the oblong-lanceolate to lanceolate leaves with closely arranged lateral nerves, undulating margin, shorter and lax

inflorescence and ellipsoid to long urceolate, purple fruits. Whereas in *S. lanceolatum*, leaves are elliptic or oblong-elliptic with distally arranged lateral nerves, dense white flowers, and purple-coloured ovoid-turbinate fruits. Roxburgh (1832) reported the edibility of fruits by the natives of Chittagong, Bangladesh. It is also consumed raw by the local people in Kerala. Fruit setting and seedling regeneration are found very high in this species evidently by the presence of many treelets of different ages in the locality.

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