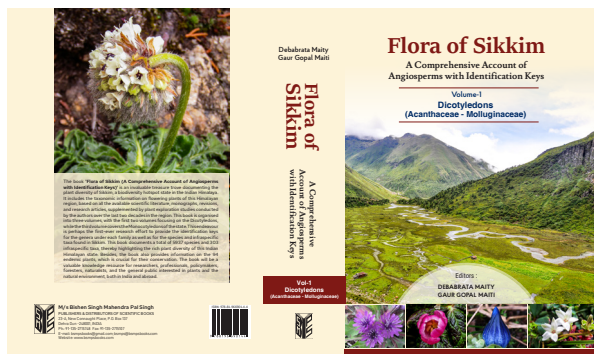


# Flora of Sikkim: A comprehensive account of angiosperms with identification keys

Debabrata Maiti and Gaur Gopal Maiti (Editors), 2024

Published by Bishen Singh Mahendra Pal Singh, Dehra Dun – 248001, 3 Volumes [Vol. 1 Dicotyledons (Acanthaceae – Molluginaceae), i–xvi, photo plates: xvii–xxiv + 600 pages, ISBN: 978-81-966901-4-4; Vol. 2 Dicotyledons (Monotropaceae – Zygophyllaceae), i–iv, photo plates: v–ix + 601–1225 pages, ISBN: 978-81-966901-5-1; Vol. 3 Monocotyledons (Acoraceae – Zingiberaceae), i–iv, photo plates: v–viii + 1227–1723 pages, ISBN: 978-81-966901-9-9], Hardbound. Price: ₹10,625.00/-; US\$ 127.99.



This three-volume book is a comprehensive account on the angiosperms of Sikkim with identification keys, contributed by twenty-two taxonomists, including the editors, either individually or jointly. The contributors are mostly from the University of Calcutta, Kolkata including a few colleges affiliated to the University, and three each from the University of Kalyani, Kalyani and University of Kashmir, Srinagar and one from the Botanical Survey of India.

The first two volumes of the Flora deal with dicotyledons and an exclusive index to botanical names of dicotyledons is appended at the end. Third volume is devoted to the monocotyledons, featuring an index and bibliography encompassing 292 references pertinent to the flora of Sikkim. The main text of the first volume of the Flora begins with a concise introduction, providing detailed information on the physiographic features, protected areas, and vegetation types of the state. Additionally, it includes a conspectus of flora of Sikkim, offering numerical data on the most diverse families and genera in both dicotyledons and monocotyledons. A table listing 94 endemic angiosperm taxa in the Sikkim Himalaya is also provided.

The families are arranged alphabetically, and the taxonomic account of each family begins with a bracketed dichotomous key to the genera, if there is more than one genus. This is followed by generic name with author(s) name and bibliographic citation, along with the total number of species distributed in Sikkim. The genera and the species under each family are arranged in alphabetical order. A dichotomous key to the species is provided. For every currently accepted/correct name of a species and an infraspecific taxon, the author(s) name and bibliographic citation are provided. However, for the basionym and synonyms (selected), only the standard form of the author(s) name is provided. The correct names are presented in regular boldface while the synonyms are in italics. This is followed by information on flowering and fruiting season and state-wise distribution.

This three-volume catalogs the distribution of 5937 species and 303 infraspecific taxa across 1599 genera in 215 families. Orchidaceae, with 561 species in 116 genera, stand out as the most diverse family, followed by Poaceae (417 species), Asteraceae (415 species), Fabaceae (353 species), Cyperaceae (210 species) and Rosaceae (205 species). Among the genera, *Carex* L. holds the top position with 106 species, followed by *Primula* L. (69 species), *Bulbophyllum* Thouras (65 species), *Pedicularis* L. (61 species), *Saxifraga* L. (61 species), and *Gentiana* L. (50 species).

Undoubtedly, this three-volume work represents an exhaustive consolidation of the plant diversity of Sikkim. It includes a total of 17 colour plates featuring beautiful photographs of 117 species. However, I believe the editors should have considered including

vernacular name(s), a brief description (at least the diagnostic characters), and habitat type along with elevational ranges for every taxon. While the Flora is user-friendly due to its alphabetical arrangement of families, the editors should have specified the classification system used, particularly regarding the acceptance of family names.

Nonetheless, the production quality of this book, including its colour photographs of plants and the jackets, is of high standard. It should be regarded as a valuable addition to the Flora of India, providing

updated data on the flowering plant diversity of Sikkim. I hope that this book will provide baseline information on the flowering plants of Sikkim-Himalaya, and will be well-referred by students, researchers, policy makers, foresters and the general public interested in the alpine and sub-alpine flora of the Himalayan region.

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