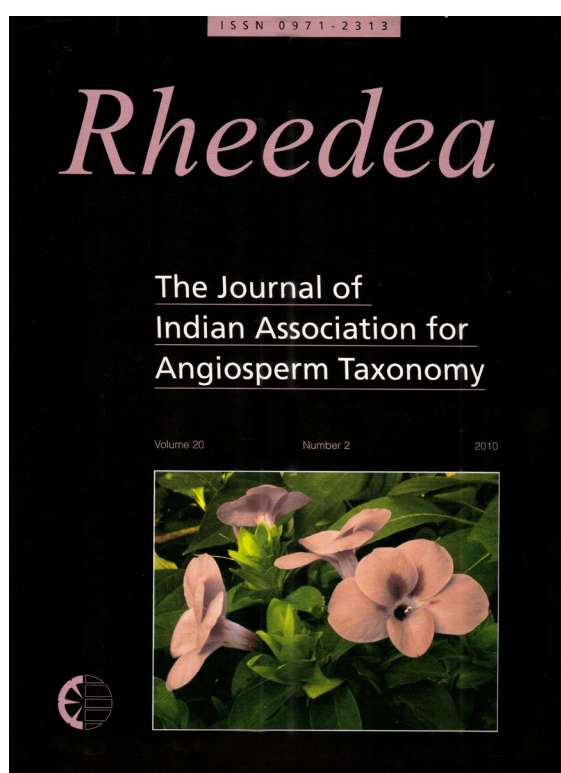




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Crotalaria incana subsp. *purpurascens* (Fabaceae) – A New Record for India

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Abstract

Crotalaria incana L. subsp. *purpurascens* (Lam.) Milne-Redh. (Fabaceae), hitherto known only from Africa is reported here for the first time from India. Detailed description with illustration is provided.

Keywords: *Crotalaria incana* subsp. *purpurascens*, India, New Record

Introduction

The genus *Crotalaria* L. with c. 700 species is centered mainly in tropical and subtropical regions of the world (Polhill, 1982; Mabberley, 2008) with highest concentration in Africa (Adema, 2006). It is the largest legume genus in India, having 93 species, 1 subspecies, 17 varieties and 2 formae of which 38 species, 1 subspecies, 9 varieties and 2 formae are endemic to India (Ansari, 2008). In southern India the genus is represented by 67 species and 4 infraspecific taxa (Sibichen & Nampy, 2007). The genus can easily be recognized by dimorphic anthers and inflated pods. Several species of this genus are known as “rattle pod” as ripe seeds move freely inside the dry pods and rattle. While carrying out carpological studies on Fabaceae of Kerala, the senior author collected a specimen of *Crotalaria* from Munnar, Idukki district which was later identified and confirmed as *C. incana* L. subsp. *purpurascens* (Lam.) Milne-Redh. This taxon was known to occur only in Africa. Hence, the present collection forms a new record for India. A detailed description with illustration is provided here for easy identification.

***Crotalaria incana* L. subsp. *purpurascens* (Lam.) Milne-Redh., Kew Bull. 15: 159. 1961; Polhill, *Crotalaria* in Africa & Madagascar: 95. 1982. *C. purpurascens* Lam., Encycl. Méth.: 200. 1786; de Candolle, Prodr. 2: 131. 1825; Sprengel, Syst. Veg. 3: 240. 1826.**

Fig. 1

Undershrubs, erect, up to 2 m high. Stems terete, indistinctly striate, ferruginous-hirsute. Leaves

3-foliolate; leaflets obovate-elliptic, glabrous, light brown when dry; terminal leaflet 2.8 – 3.7 × c. 2.5 cm; laterals 1.5 – 2.8 × 1.5 – 2 cm, ciliate at margins, membranous, glabrous, light brown when dry; petioles 4.5 – 5 cm long, longitudinally grooved; petiolules c. 1 mm long; stipules filiform, c. 7 mm long, densely ciliate; cilia c. 3 mm long. Racemes up to 14 cm long, ferruginous-hirsute; bract subulate, c. 8 mm long, persistent; bracteoles 2, c. 6 mm long, curved. Calyx c. 1 × 0.3 cm, spreading pilose, persistent; lobes lanceolate, c. 7 mm long, acute-acuminate at apex. Vexillum ovate-elliptic, c. 1.5 × 1 cm, bright yellow, purple-brown-veined; wings oblong, c. 1 × 0.8 cm, striated; keels as long as wings, abruptly rounded below middle. Staminal tube c. 5 mm long; filaments 4 – 5 mm long; anthers dimorphic. Ovary c. 5 × 1.2 mm, densely pilose; style geniculate, c. 8 mm long; stigma capitate. Pods oblongoid, c. 4 × 1 cm, with an incurved beak, ferruginous-hirsute; stipe c. 4 mm long. Seeds 20 – 30, reniform, c. 2 mm across, smooth, estrophiolate, black.

Flowering & Fruiting: December – January.

Habitat: Margins of evergreen forests at higher altitudes.

Distribution: Ethiopia and Senegal; now in India.

Specimens examined: INDIA, Kerala, Idukki district, Munnar, 16.12.2000, M. Abdull Jabbar 43969 (TBGT). ETHIOPIA, Tigre, Mt. Sholoda, Schimper 394 (Syntype, P!).

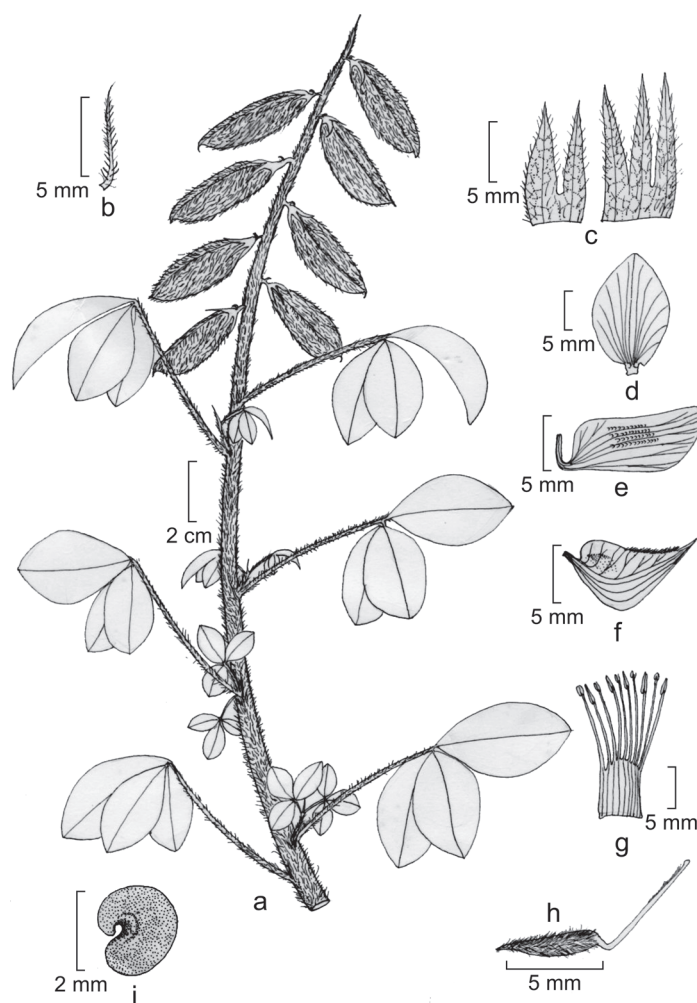


Fig. 1. *Crotalaria incana* L. subsp. *purpurascens* (Lam.) Milne-Redh.: a. Fruiting twig; b. Stipule; c. Calyx lobes; d. Vexillum; e. Wing petal; f. Keel petal; g. Staminal tube split open; h. Pistil; i. Seed.

Key to the subspecies

1. Stems shortly pubescent; bracts 1 – 3 mm long; calyx lobes subglabrous; seeds mottled, obscurely papilose ***C. incana* subsp. *incana***
1. Stems with long-brown spreading hairs; bracts 4 – 10 mm long; calyx lobes pilose; seeds smooth ***C. incana* subsp. *purpurascens***

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