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***Calamus shendurunii*, a new species of Arecaceae from Kerala, India**

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Abstract

A new species of *Calamus* is described from Shenduruny Valley, Kerala, India.

INTRODUCTION

Calamus, the sole rattan genus in South India, has so far been reported to have 14 species in Kerala (Mukundakumar *et al.*, 1998; Renuka, 1999). Recently another taxon of the same genus was collected from Shenduruny Valley in Kollam District of Kerala State. The species was found to be new and hence is described and illustrated here.

Calamus shendurunii Anto, Renuka *et* Sreekumar, *sp.nov.* (Fig. 1).

Palmijuncus caespitosus statura mediocri. Caulis cum vaginis ad 2 cm diam., sine 1.5 cm diam. Folium ecirratum, vagina viridi, spinis basi bulbosis sursum spectantibus paucis 1 cm longis; genu sine spinis. Inflorescentiae rami gracilissimi. Fructus globosus, squamis luteis lucidis in seriebus 25 medio paulo canaliculatis.

Type: India, Kerala, Kollam District: Shenduruny Valley, Evergreen forest, 300 m, 15 April 1999, Anto 006680 (*Holo*- KFRI); Vilakkumaram, Rosemala, Evergreen forest, 300 m, 21 Sept. 2000, Sreekumar 20621 (*Para*-KFRI).

Clustering, medium sized rattan. Stem reaching to 20 m, with sheaths up to 2 cm diameter, without sheaths up to 1.5 cm diameter, internodes up to 25 cm long. Sheath dark green, shining, spiny; spines very few, 1 - 4, scattered, with bulbous base, tip black, 1 cm long; knee conspicuous, devoid of spines; flagellum up to 2 m long; leaf ecirrate, to 1 m long; petiole ca. 25 cm long, armed on the dorsal side; rachis channelled on the dorsal side, ridges spiny, armed on the ventral side with recurved spines; spines 1 cm long, sturdy, bulbous based; leaflets long acuminate, regular, 35 x 3 cm; midvein setose ventrally, setae up to 1 cm long, lateral and mid veins setose dorsally towards the tip, setae up to 0.5 cm long, apical leaflets basally united. Inflorescence flagellate, 2 m long, partial inflorescences 3-4, up to 20 cm long, slender; primary sheaths closely sheathing, mouth of the sheath with bristles, secondary

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Fig. 1. *Calamus shendurunii* Anto, Renuka *et* Sreekumar: A. Portion of stem with sheath and partial inflorescence; B. Fruit (P - Persistent pedicel of the neuter flower); C. Portion of a leaf; D. Seed.

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sheath sparingly spiny; rachillae to 5 cm long. Fruit globose or obpyriform, 1 x 1.8 cm, with stalk like involucrephores, stalk to 2 mm long, the pedicel of the neuter flower persistent, represented by a small projecting tubercle, scales in 25 vertical rows, pale green, without any border, shiny, shallowly channelled along the middle. Endosperm ruminant.

Etymology: The new species is named after Shenduruny Valley from where the specimen was collected.

The species can be easily identified by its green, sparingly spiny (1- 4 spines) sheath and spineless knee. The fruits of this species resemble that of *C. gambleii*, but can be distinguished by the very nature of the inflorescence itself. In *C. gambleii* the partial inflorescence arises erect and are sturdy and arched. Rachillae also are arched and recurved, the lowest being the longest. In the new species the partial inflorescences and rachillae are very slender and they are not arched or recurved. In the fruits of *C. gambleii* the scales are golden yellow with dark coloured border. But in the new species they are pale green, without any border. The persistent pedicel of the neuter flower also is an identifying character.

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