

Notes on the Identity of *Arundinella ravii* (Poaceae) and the recollection of *Aira elegans* from India

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Abstract: Field collections from Eravikulam National Park, Kerala, initially identified as *Arundinella ravii* Shaju & N.Mohan, were re-evaluated and found to match *Aira elegans* Willd. ex Roem. & Schult., a Mediterranean species hitherto reported from India only by Bor as a garden plant. This paper synonymizes *Arundinella ravii* Shaju & N.Mohan under *Aira elegans* Willd. ex Roem. & Schult., discusses the nomenclatural complexities surrounding *Aira elegans* and *Aira elegantissima* Schur and two names, *A. elegantissima* Schur and *A. corsica* Jord. are lectotypified.

Key words: Grasses, Lectotypification, Nomenclature, Synonymy, Taxonomy.

Introduction

Grasses are often taxonomically defined using indiscernible characteristics, and there are more chances for misidentifications at a glance. Due to the hairline variances between the taxa, even dissection does not guarantee accurate construal, and confusion remains a significant possibility. As a result, identification relies radically on the subjective judgment of the researcher. Moreover, the vastness of the Poaceae confers a considerable challenge. It is a challenging task to consider the whole group for an unidentified grass specimen. Therefore, even after dissecting out the right floral parts, identification remains the last hurdle at which many may make errors. The current paper discusses on such an incident.

During the late monsoon of 2024, a field visit was conducted to Eravikulam National Park, Idukki district, Kerala, the type locality of *Arundinella ravii* Shaju & N.Mohan. Some grass specimens, collected from the Eravikulam hut area, were found to be the best match with the protologue of this species. As the authors are now focused on taxonomic studies of *Arundinella* Raddi. in India, the specimens did not seem a good fit in the genus. *Arundinella* is a widespread grass genus that is distributed across the tropics, subtropics and temperate Asia. The genus currently has 55 accepted species (POWO, 2025), of which 29 are reported in India. It is one of the prominent grass genera in India and is found in diverse habitats such as open grasslands, swampy areas, rocky places and riverbanks. The genus is currently classified under the tribe *Arundinelleae* Stapf of supertribe *Andropogonodae* L.Liu in the subfamily *Panicoideae* A.Braun (Soreng *et al.*, 2022) as they have the lower floret as male, female or neuter and a bisexual upper floret in a spikelet.

The collections from Eravikulam were very slender and had two bisexual florets per spikelet, which is unusual in *Arundinella*. Detailed examination of the specimens revealed that they are more closely allied to the genus *Aira* L. (*Pooideae* Benth.: *Poodae* L.Liu: *Poeae* R.Br.: *Agrostidodinae* Soreng: *Airinae* Fr.) (Soreng *et al.*, 2022). Presently, the genus *Aira* consist of 11 species, mainly distributed in Africa, Europe to Iran, Tibet and the Western Himalaya (POWO, 2025). The occurrence of *Aira caryophyllea* L.

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from India has been previously reported (Bor, 1960; Gosavi *et al.*, 2016; Kellogg *et al.*, 2020) but are not found common. Nonetheless, there is no report of any species of *Aira* from South India other than *Aira maderaspatana* Nees *ex* Steud, an unplaced name, which have no valid taxonomic status (GBIF, 2025; POWO, 2025; IPNI, 2025). No specimens were traceable for the name and the description was insufficient to stand on its own. In the given account, Steudel described a plant from Madras but is not possible to connect the description to any accepted name due to the lack of specimens. Overall, *Aira* is a native of temperate regions and is not prominent in India. This might be the reason for the misinterpretation.

Materials and Methods

A field visit was conducted to Eravikulam National Park in October 2024, during which the specimens were collected. Photographs of habit and habitat were taken using Canon EOS 1500D digital camera (Japan). The specimens were dissected and studied in the laboratory using a Leica S APO Stereozoom (1.0×–8.0×) microscope (Germany). Digital images were taken using a 12 MP Flexacam C3 microscope camera (Germany) attached to the Leica S APO Stereozoom (1.0×–8.0×) microscope. Line drawings of the dissected parts were prepared with the aid of a Leica M80 series stereomicroscope equipped with a camera lucida (Singapore) and inked with Rotring Isograph pens of 0.1 mm and 0.2 mm thickness in Indian ink. The specimens were identified using the literature available online and offline and the identity was confirmed with experts. The photo-plates were prepared using Adobe Photoshop Version 21.0.2. The collected specimens were processed and mounted on herbarium sheet following Gould (1968) as voucher specimens and deposited in the Calicut University Herbarium (CALI). The additional specimens were consulted physically visiting the herbarium (TBGT) or through virtual databases (K, W, GE) and through email enquiries (LAU).

Taxonomic treatment

Aira elegans Willd. *ex* Roem. & Schult., Syst. Veg., ed. 15. 2: 682. 1817; Willk. & Lange, Prodr. Fl. Hispan. 1: 65. 1861; Hitchc. & Chase, Man. Grasses U.S., ed. 2. 299. 1951; Radford, H.E. Ahles & C.R. Bell, Man. Vasc. Fl. Carolinas 96. 1968; F. Albers, Phytion (Horn) 20(1–2): 97. 1980; S. Castroviejo *et al.* (eds.), Fl. Iber. 9: 486. 2020; W.M. Knapp & Naczi, Smithsonian Contr. Bot. 113: 68. 2021. *Type*: ITALY, **Papia (Pavia)**, *s.d.*, *L. Thomas s.n.* [(LAU 60204 digital image!)]

Aira capillaris Host, Icon. Descr. Gram. Austriac., 4: 20, t 35. 1809; Salzm. *ex* Trin., Mém. Acad. Imp. Sci. St.-Pétersbourg, Sér. 6, Sci. Math. 1(1): 58. 1831; B. Heyne *ex* Hook. f., Fl. Brit. India 7: 58. 1896; B.L. Rob. & Fernald, Gray. New Man. Bot. ed. 7: 137. 1908; H.L. Blomq., The Grass. North Carolinas: 72. 1948. *Avena capillaris* (Host) Mert. & W.D.J. Koch, in Roehl., Deutschl. Fl. ed. 3: 573. 1823. *Aira caryophyllea* L. var. *capillaris* (Host) Bluff & Fingerh., Comp. Fl. German., ed. 2, 1(1): 139. 1836. *Airopsis capillaris* (Host) Schur, Oesterr. Bot. Z. 9: 328. 1859. *Fussia capillaris* (Host) Schur, Enum. Pl. Transsilv. 754. 1866. *Airella capillaris* (Host) Dumort., Bull. Soc. Roy. Bot. Belgique 7: 68. 1868. *Aspris capillaris* (Host) Hitchc., Bull. U.S.D.A. 772: 116. 1920. *Aira elegantissima* Schur subsp. *hosteana* Holub, Folia Geobot. Phytotax. 8(2): 176. 1973. *non* Savi, 1798, *nec* Lag. 1805. *Lectotype* (designated by Tzvelev & Probatova, 2019): *S.loc.*, *Herb. Host, s.d.*, *s.coll. s.n.* (W [W0279298/W1885-0002370] digital image!).

Aira caryophyllea L. var. *expansa* K. Koch, Linnaea 21: 390. 1848. *Syntypes*: TURKEY, **Istanbul (Constantinople)**, on limestone and marl near Constantinople at 1500' (feet) high, *s.d.*, *K. Koch, s.n.* and GEORGIA, *s.d.*, *K. Koch, s.n.* (non-traceable).

Aira elegantissima Schur, Verh. Mitth. Siebenbürg. Vereins Naturwiss. Hermannstadt 4: 85. 1853; G.C. Tucker, Harvard Pap. Bot. 1(9): 54. 1996; Zuolaga, Morrone & Belgrano (eds.), Cat. Pl. Vasc. Rep. Cono Sur. 1: 625. 2008; Y. Cho, J. Kim

& B.Lee, J. Species Res. 6(2): 174. 2017. *Airopsis capillaris* (Mert. & W.D.J.Koch) Schur var. *divaricataelegantissima* Schur, Oesterr. Bot. Z. 9: 328. 1859. *Fussia capillaris* (Mutel) Schur var. *elegantissima* (Schur) Schur, Enum. Pl. Transsilv. 755. 1866. *Lectotype* (designated here): ROMANIA, July 1846, Schur P.J.F. s.n. (W [W0025351 digital image!]).

Aira ambigua De Not., Ann. Sci. Nat., Bot. 3 (5): 365. 1846, non Michaux 1803. *Aira capillaris* Host var. *ambigua* De Not., Fl. Brandenburg 1(2): 831. 1864. *Aira capillaris* Host subsp. *ambigua* (De Not.) Arcang., Comp. Fl. Ital. 775. 1882. *Aira elegans* Willd. ex Roem. & Schult. subsp. *ambigua* (De Not.) Holub, Preslia 36: 251. 1964. *Aira elegantissima* Schur subsp. *ambigua* (De Not.) Dogan, Notes Roy. Bot. Gard. Edinburgh 40(3): 509. 1983. *Aira notarisiana* Steud., Syn. Pl. Glumac. 1(3): 221. 1854. *Aira elegans* Willd. ex Roem. & Schult. subsp. *notarisiana* (Steud.) Soják, Sborn. Nár. Mus. v Praze, Rada B, Prír. Vedy 4: 137. 1963. *Lectotype* (designated by Tzvelev & Probatova, 2019): ITALY, **Genoa**, 1845, *De Notaris* s.n. (HAL [HAL0134558 digital image!]).

Aira corsica Jord., Mém. Acad. Natl. Sci. Lyon, Cl. Sci. 1: 353. 1852. *Aira capillaris* Host subsp. *corsica* (Jord.) Arcang., Comp. Fl. Ital. 775. 1882. *Aira elegans* Willd. ex Roem. & Schult. var. *biaristata* Godr., in Grenier J.C.M. & Godron D.A., Fl. France 3: 505. 1856. *Lectotype* (designated here): FRANCE, **Corsica**, Ajaccio, May 1840, *A. Jordan* s.n. (GE [G00164639 digital image!]).

Aira sicula Tod., Index Seminum Panorm. 38. 1872; in Nuov. Giorn. Bot. 5: 156. 1873. *Type*: ITALY, **Sicily**, in the maritime thickets, between Mirto and the plain of Naso, 1843, *A. Todaro* s.n. (non traceable).

Aira byzantina F.Albers, Willdenowia 9(2): 284. 1979. *Type*: TURKEY, **Smyrna (Izmir)**, monte Yamanlar 800–900 m, 22.05.1906, 9, *J. Bornmiller* 10144 (Holo B [B100715360 digital image!]).

Arundinella ravii Shaju & N.Mohanan, Rheedea

14(1–2): 47. 2004. **Syn. nov.** *Type*: INDIA, **Kerala**, Idukki district, Eravikulam National Park ±1880 m, 8.11.2000, *Shaju* 43700 (Holo TBGT!; Iso TBGT!, CALI *n.v.*, MH *n.v.*).

Aira saxatilis Salzm. ex Trin., Mém. Acad. Imp. Sci. St.-Pétersbourg, Sér. 6, Sci. Math. 1(1): 59. 1831, *pro syn.*

Aira caryophyllea sensu Gaudin, Agrost. Helv. 1: 130. 1811, non L., Sp. Pl. 1: 66. 1753. **Figs. 1 & 2**

Annual herbs; 10–20 cm tall, culms slender, tufted. Leaves 2–10 cm long, linear, rolled. Ligule c. 1 mm long, subulate, margins entire. Inflorescence open or contracted panicles, typically biforked at the ends, 3–6 cm long. Spikelets laterally compressed, c. 0.2 cm long (without awn), c. 0.3 cm long (with awn); glumes sub-equal, more or less similar to each other, c. 0.2 cm long, covering the florets entirely rather than the awn, membranous, hyaline, oblong, abruptly narrowed towards the distal half into a short acumen, 1-veined and 1-keeled, apex acuminate, margins toothed. Lower floret c. 0.1 cm long, hermaphrodite; lower lemma awnless, lanceolate, scabrous, indistinctly 3-nerved, c. 0.1 cm long; lower palea almost equal in size with the lemma, apex notched. Upper floret c. 0.3 cm long, hermaphrodite; upper lemma awned, c. 0.3 cm long (with awn), c. 0.15 cm long geniculate awn is starting from the lower back of the lemma, apex ultimately bifurcated; upper palea similar to lower palea, apex notched, c. 0.1 cm long. Stamens 3, c. 0.03 cm long. Pistil c. 0.04 cm long. Caryopsis not seen.

Flowering & fruiting: Generally, this grass is observed in spring seasons. In India, the plant is seen in bloom in post monsoon times (October to December).

Ecology & Habitat: Generally found in open, often disturbed areas; also cultivated as an ornamental grass.

Distribution: The native range of this species is Eastern, Central & Southern Europe to Northern Iran, North West Africa. Primarily grows in

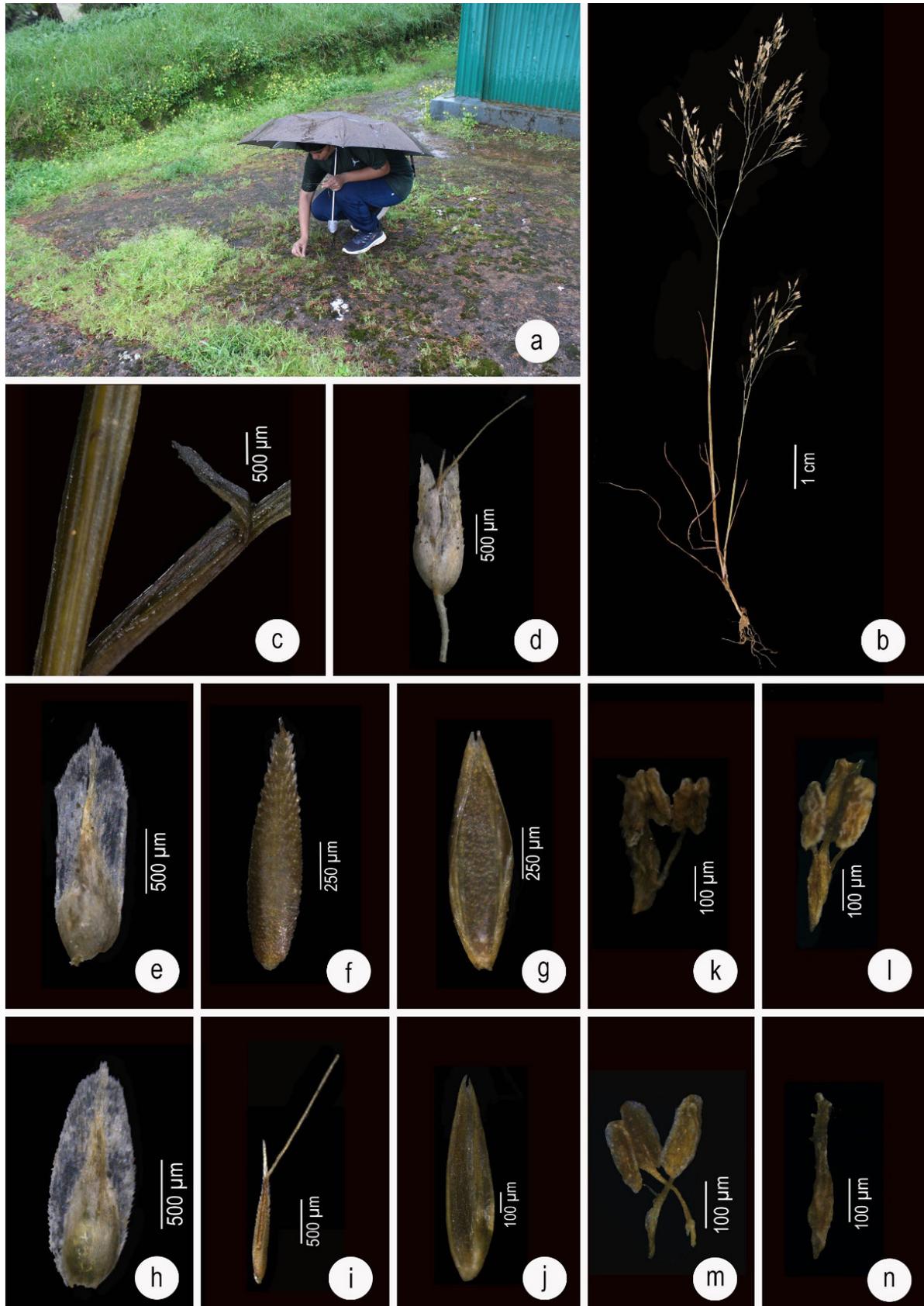


Fig. 1. *Aira elegans* Willd. ex Roem. & Schult.: **a.** Habitat; **b.** Habit; **c.** Ligule; **d.** Spikelet; **e.** Lower glume; **f.** Lower lemma; **g.** Lower palea; **h.** Upper glume; **i.** Upper lemma; **j.** Upper palea; **k.** Lower flower; **l.** Upper flower; **m.** Stamens; **n.** Pistil after fertilization (from Ambika I. & M.R. Pradhyumnan 215161; Photos by Ambika I. & M.R. Pradhyumnan).

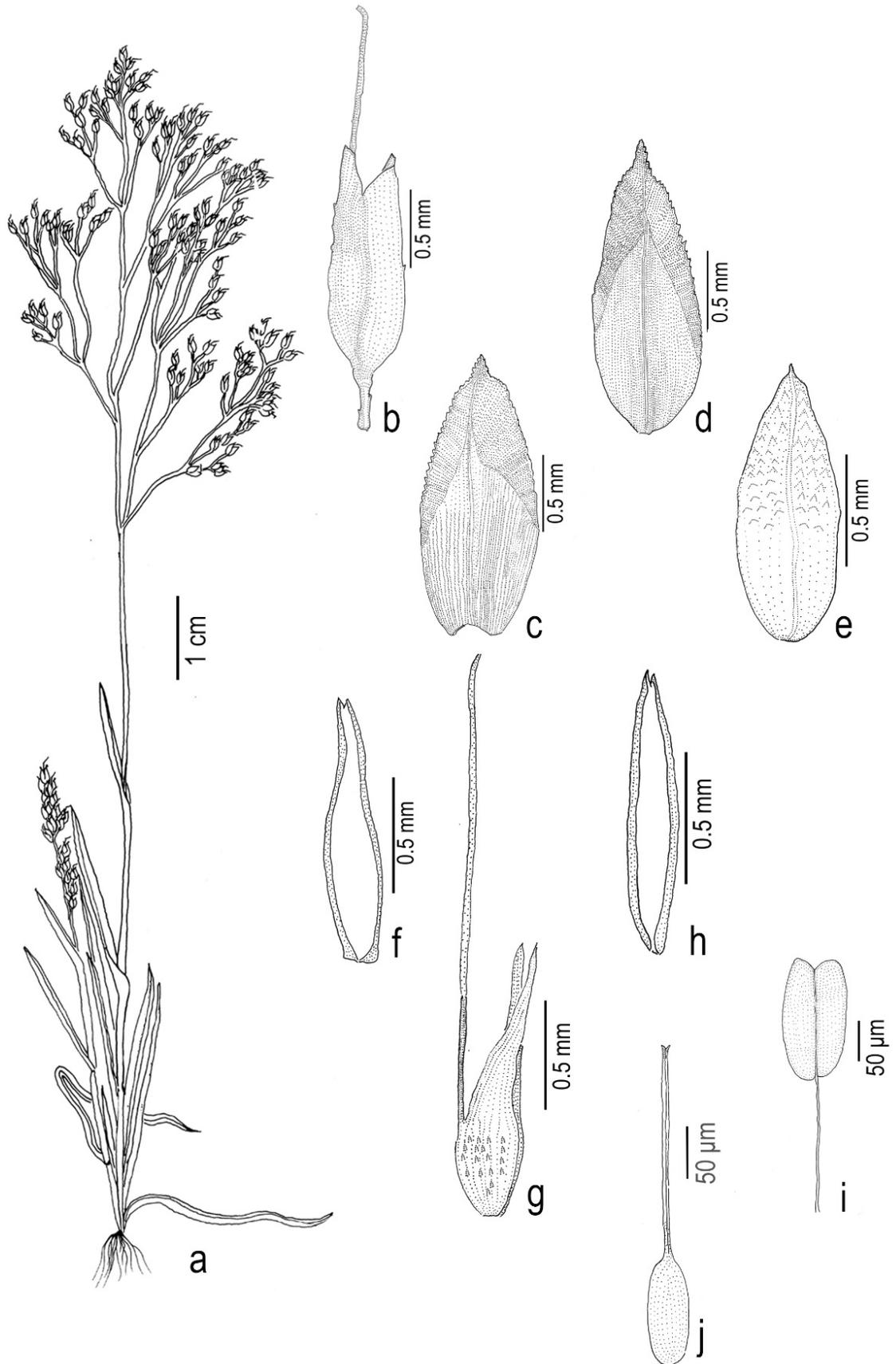


Fig. 2. *Aira elegans* Willd. ex Roem. & Schult.: **a.** Habit; **b.** Spikelet; **c.** Lower glume; **d.** Upper glume; **e.** Lower lemma; **f.** Lower palea; **g.** Upper lemma; **h.** Upper palea; **i.** Stamen; **j.** Pistil after fertilization (from Ambika I. & M.R. Pradhyumnani 215161; Illustrated by Ambika I.)

temperate biomes, reported as an adventive from many tropical countries (POWO, 2025). Current report confirms the occurrence of the species from India as none of the literature had ever mentioned this species after Bor (1960).

Note: According to POWO (2025) and WFO (2025) *Aira elegans* Willd. ex Gaudin is a pro synonym of *Molineriella laevis* (Brot.) Rouy (= *Aira laevis* Brot.). After examining the protologues of the names, it has been resolved that *Aira elegans* Willd., treated under *Aira caryophyllea* by Gaudin and *Aira laevis* Brot. are different from each other by the size of the glumes as well as the absence and presence respectively of the awn in the lower floret.

Additional specimens examined: INDIA, **Kerala**, Idukki district, Eravikulam National Park, front of Eravikulam hut 2100 m, 10013'10" N, 7704'40" E, 04.12.1979, *Clifford G. Rice* 63 [K (K003585088 digital image!)]]; Kallar, 4.10.1997, *S.D. Biju* 36464 (TBGT!); in front of Eravikulam hut 2192 m 10° 13' 16.74" N, 077° 04' 44.1" E, 06.10.2024. *Ambika I. & Pradhyumnan M.R.* 215161 (CALI!)

Discussion

a) Taxonomic history and Identification

The initial dissection of the specimens collected during the present study from Eravikulam National Park confirmed that the plant in question belong to *Arundinella ravii* Shaju & N.Mohanan, a species originally described from the Eravikulam National Park itself (Shaju & Mohanan, 2004). No additional collections were reported after the type collection. Recently, during an herbarium survey at the Jawaharlal Nehru Tropical Botanical Garden herbarium (TBGT), another collection from Kallar in Idukki district was found annotated as *Arundinella ravii*. However, on a detailed examination, the specimens showed more affinities towards *Aira* L. than with *Arundinella* Raddi. The detailed photo plates and illustrations of the collected specimen are provided in fig. 1 and fig. 2, respectively. Both the genera in

question were reviewed carefully and the major characteristics that differentiate these two genera are enlisted in table 1.

Through a personal communication (dated 04.10.2024) with one of the authors of *Arundinella ravii*, the type locality was confirmed to be in front of the hut of Eravikulam National Park. A collection trip was subsequently conducted and specimens were collected from the type locality. Further taxonomic investigations showed that this specimen is more consistent with the features of *Aira*, an uncommon grass genus to South India mainly in having subequal glumes and an awn developed well down from the back of upper lemma (Watson & Dallwitz, 1992). Correspondingly, an herbarium sheet identified as *Aira elegantissima* Schur, collected by Clifford G. Rice from the same locality in 1979 was found at Kew. The diagnosis in the protologue of *Aira elegantissima* was insufficient to determine whether the collections from Eravikulam are a true fit for the same.

While reviewing more literature related to *Aira*, a nomenclatural and taxonomic dispute between *Aira elegans* and *Aira elegantissima* has been noticed. The dispute is discussed below in the light of the available literature and resources.

The plant being discussed here was first described by Host (1809) as *Aira capillaris*. However, this name proposed was an illegitimate later homonym of *Aira capillaris* Savi (1798). Subsequently, the name *Aira elegans*, attributed to Willdenow, was first published by Gaudin in 1811. Inopportunistly, he added this unpublished name of Willdenow under his treatment of *Aira caryophyllea* L., thus making it invalid. In 1817, Roemer and Schultes used the name as a replaced synonym for *Aira capillaris* Host by ascribing the name and description to Willdenow, and thus validated the name *Aira elegans*.

In 1853, Schur proposed another name *Aira elegantissima* with a short diagnosis, but cited *Aira*

capillaris Host as a separate species and *Aira elegans* was not even mentioned. The diagnosis provided for *Aira elegantissima* was not enough to determine the credibility of the species. Whereas again in 1866, Schur transferred some of the species of *Aira* into a new genus, *Fussia*. He shifted *Aira capillaris* to *Fussia*, as *F. capillaris* and mentioned *Aira elegans* Willd. as a synonym of *Fussia capillaris*. But then again, he cited only Gaudin's publication, not Roemer and Schultes (1817). Also, he treated *Aira elegantissima* as a variety under *Fussia capillaris* and proposed a new combination *Fussia capillaris* var. *elegantissima* and provided a detailed description for the same. The genus *Fussia* was a superfluous name and is now considered as a synonym of *Aira*.

The publication of Roemer and Schultes (1817) was unnoticed for a long period and the name *Aira elegans* Willd. was considered as invalid according to Gaudin's publication. Gaudin mentioned *Aira elegans* Willd. *in ed.* (with a short description) while treating *Aira caryophyllea* L. In the meantime, many used *Aira capillaris* Host without knowing it is a later homonym, and *Aira elegantissima* Schur also gained attention. This could be the reason behind Tutin (1980) synonymizing both *Aira capillaris* Host and *Aira elegans* Willd. ex Gaudin as an illegitimate name under *Aira elegantissima* Schur without any explanation. Further, Kartez and Gandhi (1990) discussed the nomenclature and provided an explanation for Tutin (1980). However, they also did not mention Roemer and Schultes publication and treated *Aira elegans* Willd. ex Gaudin as invalid. Many have treated *Aira elegans* as a synonym of *Aira elegantissima* and vice versa leading to a taxonomic confusion.

After evaluating the descriptions of *Aira elegans* and *Fussia capillaris* var. *elegantissima* (= *Aira elegantissima*), it has been concluded that both descriptions are matching with that of *Aira capillaris* Host. Consequently, *Aira elegans* Willd. ex Gaudin (1811) is not a valid name but happened to be published as a pro-synonym of *Aira caryophyllea* L. It was Roemer and Schultes

who replaced *Aira capillaris* Host by *Aira elegans* Willd., and thereby validated the later name (ICN Art. 36.1; Turland *et al.*, 2025). Also, they referred to Gaudin's publication in 1811, suggesting that in both works same plant had been discussed. Therefore, the correct name for this taxon according to the rule of priority is *Aira elegans* Willd. ex Roem. & Schult. and *Aira elegantissima* Schur will be a synonym. Also, according to the recent databases (POWO 2025, WFO 2025) and floras (Castroviejo *et al.*, 2020) *Aira elegans* Willd. ex Roem. & Schult. is the accepted name.

The illustration and descriptions provided in the protologue of *Aira capillaris*, *Aira elegans* and *Fussia capillaris* var. *elegantissima* (= *Aira elegantissima*) were identical with that of *Arundinella ravii* and the recently collected specimens. Hence, the collected material was identified as *Aira elegans* and the identity was confirmed through personal communication (dated 19.06.2025) by Elizabeth A. Kellogg of The Donald Danforth Plant Science Center.

Consequently, *Arundinella ravii* is being synonymized under *Aira elegans*. This forms the first authentic report of the genus *Aira* L. from South India and recollection of *Aira elegans* from India. Bor (1960) included *Aira caryophyllea* L. in his capacious work on the grasses of Indian sub-continent as an introduced plant. He also mentioned that *Aira elegans*, which "is similar but much more delicate and graceful plant is sometimes cultivated in gardens". After Bor (1960), this is the first report that confirms the occurrence of this species from India.

Even though *Aira elegans* is native to mediterranean, it has been reported from various locations as an adventive species. An interesting note is that the plant is also reported in geothermal fields, where vegetation establishment and growth is limited by several chemical and physical factors (Chiarucci *et al.*, 2008).

Eravikulam hut, from where the current

specimens, *Arundinella ravii* and the specimen found in the Kew herbarium were gathered at a place built in British colonial times, a former retreat where officials once vacationed. Therefore, this plant could be a garden relic that has persisted in a small local population for many years, overcoming various disturbances.

b) Lectotypifications

Tzvelev and Probatova (2019) lectotypified a sheet from the herbarium of Host and now deposited in the Herbarium of the Natural History Museum in Vienna (W) for the name *Aira capillaris* Host and treated this name under *Aira elegans* Willd. ex Roem. & Schult., *Aira elegantissima* Schur was also

considered as a synonym of *Aira elegans* Willd. ex Roem. & Schult. Since *Aira capillaris* and *Aira elegans* and *Aira elegantissima* are names based on different specimens, they cannot be considered as homotypic synonyms. Therefore, the typification of Tzvelev and Probatova (2019) is only applicable to the name *Aira capillaris* Host.

Even though the illegitimate *Aira capillaris* was replaced by *Aira elegans*, there was a reference to Gaudin's publication. Gaudin (1811), who effectively published the name *Aira elegans* Willd. mentioned a collection of L. Thomas from Papia along with his observations about the species. Hence this can be considered as the original material for the name *Aira elegans*. A herbarium sheet matching with the above details (LAU 60204, Fig. 3.) was found in Muséum cantonal des sciences naturelles, Laussane, Switzerland (LAU).



Fig. 3. Type of *Aira elegans* Willd. ex Roem. & Schult. at LAU (LAU 60204) [© Herbarium LAU, Naturéum, Lausanne, Switzerland. Reproduced with the consent of Herbarium LAU, Naturéum, Lausanne, Switzerland].

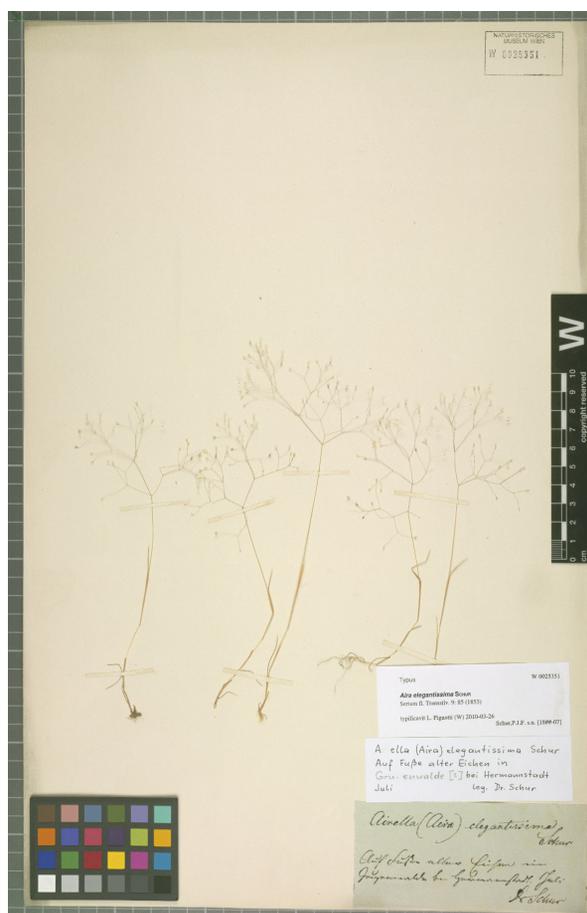


Fig. 4. Lectotype of *Aira elegantissima* Schur at W (W0025351) [© Natural History Museum. Reproduced with the consent of the Natural History Museum, Vienna].

Thus, this is the single specimen belongs to the original material and hence is the type of *Aira elegans* Willd. ex Roem. & Schult. (ICN Art. 7.5. & Art. 9.1.; Turland *et al.*, 2025).

Similarly, *Aira elegantissima* Schur is also a heterotypic synonym of *Aira elegans* Willd. ex Roem. & Schult. There were no materials cited in the protologue of *Aira elegantissima* thus there is no holotype available for the species as per ICN Art. 9. 1. (Turland *et al.*, 2025). However, the same author, Schur (1866) provided a description for his new combination *Fussia capillaris* var. *elegantissima* which was based on *Aira elegantissima*, in which he mentioned his collection from Romania during June–July in 1846. An herbarium sheet (W0025351, Fig. 4) with a handwritten label of Schur containing the same information in the description was found in the Herbarium of the Natural History Museum, Vienna (W). In view

of the fact that both *Aira elegantissima* and *Fussia capillaris* var. *elegantissima* were proposed by Schur and the year of collection in the herbarium sheet is before the publication of the first name *Aira elegantissima*, this can be considered as original material (ICN Art. 9.4.; Turland *et al.*, 2025). Thus, the name is being lectotypified here (ICN Art. 9.3.; Turland *et al.*, 2025).

Correspondingly, *Aira corsica* Jord. is a name published by Jordan (1852) based on his collections from Ajaccio in Corsica, France. *Aira elegans* Willd. ex Roem. & Schult. var. *biaristata* Godr. was also based on the specimens from Ajaccio, and since in the protologue they have mentioned *Aira corsica* as a synonym, both names are considered here as homotypic. One sheet (BM001134204) from Natural History Museum, London and Two sheets from Geneva herbarium (G00164639, G00164640) were found to be originally collected by Jordan. All sheets had handwritten labels not of Jordan, but probably of the successive acquirers of his herbaria. Among the sheets, one from Geneva (G00164639, Fig.5.) had the collection date, that is before the publication of the name in the handwritten label and hence this specimen is chosen as the lectotype (ICN Art. 9.1. & Art. 9.3.; Turland *et al.*, 2025). These names are now synonymized under *Aira elegans*.

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Fig. 5. Lectotype of *Aira corsica* Jord. at GE (G00164639) [© Conservatoire et Jardin botaniques de la Ville de Genève. Reproduced with the consent of the Phanerogamic Herbarium (G), Conservatoire et jardin botaniques (CJB)].

Table 1. Comparative morphological differences between *Aira* L. and *Arundinella* Raddi.

Character	<i>Aira</i>	<i>Arundinella</i>
Habit	Annuals; culms slender, 2–40 cm high, unbranched above	Annual or perennial; culms tough, erect, 30–150 cm high, branched or unbranched above
Spikelet	Two florets, both hermaphrodite	Two florets, one hemaphrodite and one male, female or neuter (rarely both floret hermaphrodite)
Glumes	More or less equal covering the florets completely except awn	Considerably unequal, lower glume always shorter than upper glume
Lemma	Upper lemma awned; lower lemma awned or awnless; awn 1 when present, geniculate, from well down the back	Upper lemma awned or awnless; lower lemma awnless; awn 1 when present, geniculate, from a sinus
Caryopsis	Adhering to lemma and/or palea	Free from lemma and palea

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