

# *Pilea victoriae* (Urticaceae): a new record for the Flora of Nepal

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**Abstract:** *Pilea victoriae* V.Suresh & Sojan (Urticaceae) is reported here as a new addition to the flora of Nepal. The species has been documented from multiple localities across eastern and central Nepal. *Pilea victoriae* can be distinguished from its allied Nepalese species, *P. microphylla*, by its erect stems, petiole length, leaves and flowers characteristics. A brief description, diagnostic key, photographs and distribution are provided in this article.

**Keywords:** Epipetric, Flora of Nepal, Lithophytic, *Pilea victoriae*, Urticaceae.

## Introduction

The genus *Pilea* Lindl. is the largest within the family Urticaceae Juss., comprising mostly of herbaceous species. The species of this genus are native to New World, tropical & subtropical Old World. It comprises of more than 600 species distributed in different parts of the world (POWO, 2025; WFO, 2025). The genus can be easily distinguished from other genera in Urticaceae by its opposite leaves with a single ligulate stipule in each axil and pistillate flowers with a 3–5 parted asymmetrical perigonium (Jose *et al.*, 2017).

To date, 21 taxa of *Pilea* have been documented in Nepal (Press *et al.*, 2000; Rajbhandari & Rai, 2019; Shrestha *et al.*, 2022; Poudel *et al.*, 2025). During recent botanical explorations and plant collection across various parts of Nepal, the first author came across several populations of *Pilea*. Among these, some unique plant specimens were collected from different localities in Bagmati province (Central Nepal) and Koshi province (Eastern Nepal).

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After a detailed study of the specimens and comparison with protologue (Jose *et al.*, 2017), published taxonomic descriptions (Deshmukh *et al.*, 2018; Hasan *et al.*, 2023) and digitized images of herbarium specimens housed at KATH, BSI, CAL, etc., the specimens were identified as *Pilea victoriae* V.Suresh & Sojan. This species is a prostrate herb, turning erect; reported from India (Jose *et al.*, 2017) and later from Bangladesh (Hasan *et al.*, 2023), but has not been recorded from Nepal (Press *et al.*, 2000; Rajbhandari & Rai, 2019; Shrestha *et al.*, 2022; KATH, 2025; Poudel *et al.*, 2025). Accordingly, we report *P. victoriae* here as a new record for the flora of Nepal. A detailed description, distribution, and color photographs are provided to support this record.

## Materials and Methods

Plant specimens were collected from different parts of Eastern and Central Nepal following standard techniques, and herbarium specimens were prepared following Bridson and Forman (1998). The voucher specimens of *P. victoriae* have been deposited at the National Herbarium and Plant Laboratories (KATH), Godawari, Lalitpur, Nepal.

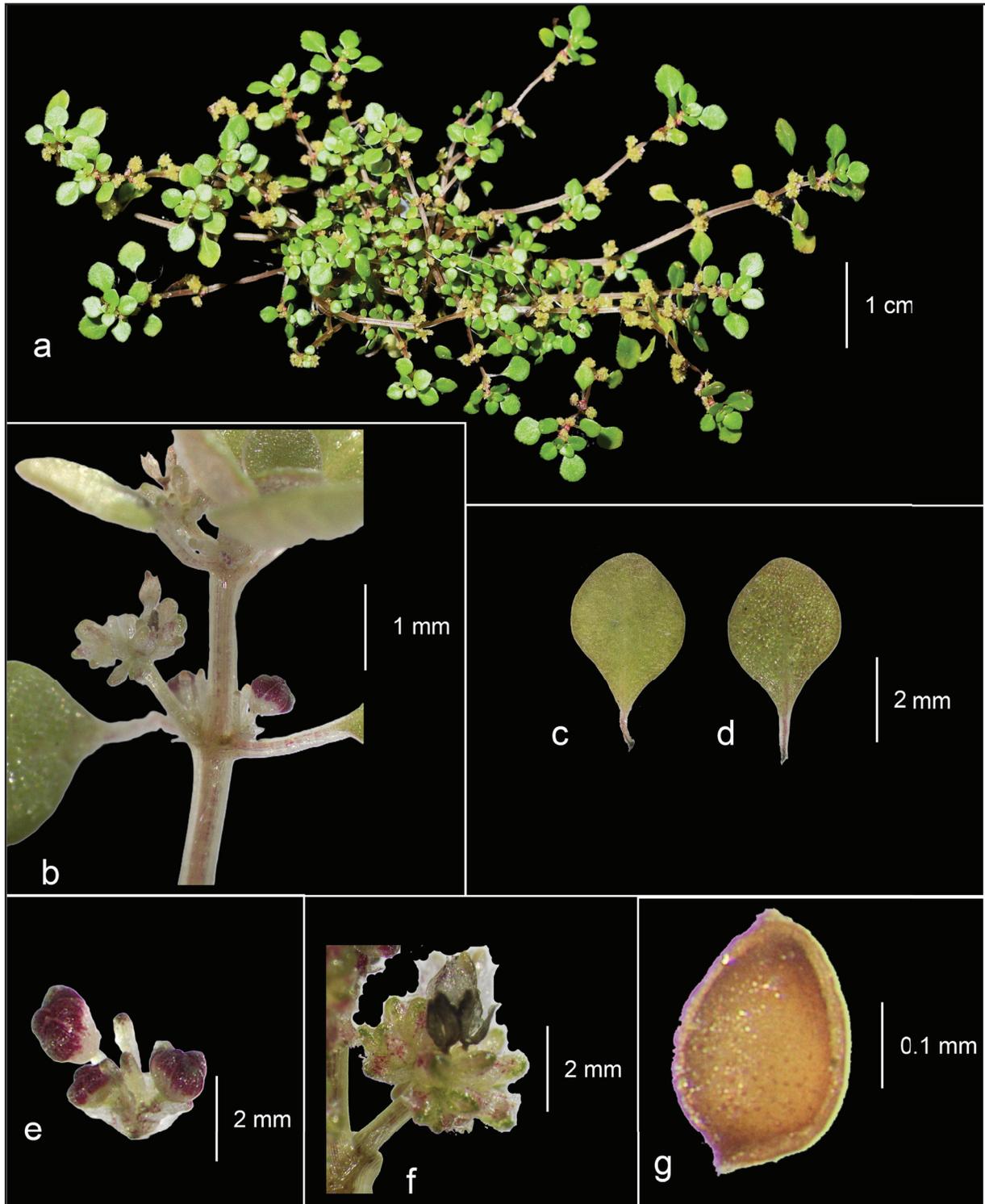
## Taxonomic Treatment

***Pilea victoriae*** V.Suresh & Sojan (Urticaceae), Int. J. Advanced Res. 5(8): 1637. 2017. Type: INDIA, Kerala, Palakkad District, Victoria College Campus, 07.08.2013, Sojan Jose & V. Suresh 091 (holo CALI, iso MH, CMPR, CATH). **Fig. 1**

Herbs, upto 10 cm, lithophytic, mostly epipetric.

Stems prostrate turning into erect; pale green to pinkish green, semi-transparent, glabrous, succulent, with distinct nodes and internodes, 2–8 mm long. Leaves stipulate, petiolate, opposite; petioles sub-equal, 1.5–4 mm long,

glabrous, succulent, semi-transparent; leaf blade orbicular, 2–5 × 2–3 mm, base cuneate, apex rounded to obtuse, sometimes minutely acute, margins entire; upper surface green, glabrous, glandular, mid-rib depressed; lower surfaces pale



**Fig. 1.** *Pilea victoriana* V.Suresh & Sojan. **a.** Habit; **b.** Flowering twig with staminate and pistillate inflorescences arising from leaf axils; **c.** Leaf-abaxial surface; **d.** Leaf-adaxial surface; **e.** Cluster of staminate flowers; **f.** Cluster of pistillate flowers; **g.** Seed.

green, with glandular trichomes, mid-rib ridged. Inflorescences cymose, 5–15 per stem, axillary; flowers unisexual, monoecious, bracteate; bracts slightly triangular, transparent, apex acute. Staminate inflorescences 1 per axil, sub-sessile to peduncle upto 1 mm long, glabrous, transparent, 2–4 flowers in compact heads; pedicels 0.2–0.3 mm long, transparent, glabrous; staminate flowers pinkish; tepals 4, glabrous; stamens 4; filaments short; anthers pale white, ditheous, longitudinally dehiscent. Pistillate inflorescence usually 1 per axil, with 14–20 pistillate flowers in compact heads; peduncles 1.5–2 mm long, glabrous, transparent, pedicels 0.2–0.3 mm long, transparent, glabrous; pistillate flowers transparent to pale white; tepals 4, glabrous, transparent, persistent, often enlarged in fruits. Achenes ovoid, *c.* 0.3 × 0.2 mm, brown to golden brown, compressed, smooth, enclosed by persistent tepals.

*Flowering & fruiting:* Flowering and fruiting from July to November.

*Habitat:* The species was mostly recorded in sandy soils, concrete walls and bricks paved paths. More luxuriant growth in damp walls under partial shades.

*Distribution:* Bangladesh, India, Nepal (after Jose et al., 2017; Hasan et al., 2023; POWO, 2025, and this study).

*Specimens examined:* NEPAL, **Central Nepal**, Bagmati province, Lalitpur district, Godawari, 10.09.2024, *P. Chalise* 240910050 (KATH); Godawari, National Herbarium premises, 01.09.2024, *P. Chalise* & *Y.R. Paneru* 240901050 (KATH); National Botanical Garden, 06.09.2002, *N. Joshi* 455 (KATH [KATH045739]); *Ibid.*, 12.09.2024, *P. Chalise* & *Y.R. Paneru* 20240912001 (KATH [KATH171064]); National Herbarium and Plant Laboratories, 10.09.2024, *S. Dhakal* & *B. Silwal* NHPL001 (KATH171193); Kathmandu district, Thapathali, 13.09.2024, *P. Chalise* & *S. Dhakal* 20240913003 (KATH [KATH171065, KATH171066, KATH171067, KATH171068]); *Ibid.*, 14.01.1970, *N.P. Manandhar* 16754 (KATH

[KATH045741, KATH045740]); Chitwan district, Rampur campus, 6.10.2024, *S. Dhakal* CH004 (KATH [KATH171189]); Makawanpur district, Hetauda, Brindaban Botanical Garden, 29.10.2024, *S. Dhakal*, *M. Pandey* & *N. Bhattarai* 24102500102 (KATH [KATH171190]); **Eastern Nepal**, Koshi province, Jhapa district, Chandragadhi, 28.09.2024, *P. Chalise*, *P.B. Lakhey* & *S. Adhikari* T080 (KATH [KATH170408, KATH170409])

**Notes:** Morphologically, *P. victoriae* V.Suresh & Sojan shows great resemblance to another Nepalese species *P. microphylla* (L.) Liebm. but differs in terms of their habit, stem, leaves and inflorescence. *P. microphylla* appears almost all round the year but in case of *P. victoriae*, new seedlings germinate by June and survive usually till late November and dry up completely by December.

### Key to allied species of *Pilea* in Nepal

- 1a. Stems prostrate; petioles much reduced, upto 1.5 mm long; leaf blade elliptic-obovate; pistillate inflorescences 5–10-flowered .....  
*P. microphylla*
- 1b. Stems erect; petioles long, 1.5–4 mm long; leaf blade orbicular; pistillate inflorescences 14–20-flowered ..... *P. victoriae*

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