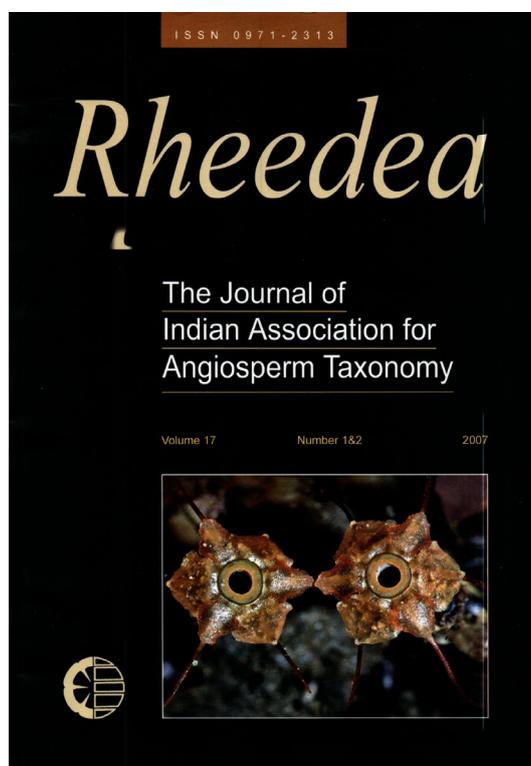




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How to cite:

Murugesan M., Balasubramaniam V. & S. Paulsamy 2007. Rediscovery of *Memecylon sisparens* Gamble (Melastomataceae) and *Swertia beddomei* C.B. Clarke (Gentianaceae). *Rheedia* 17(1&2): 33-34.

<https://dx.doi.org/10.22244/rheedia.2007.17.1&2.08>

Received: 14.03.2006

Revised and accepted: 09.03.2006

Published in print: 31.03.2007

Published Online: 31.03.2007

Rediscovery of *Memecylon sisparens* Gamble (Melastomataceae) and *Swertia beddomei* C. B. Clarke (Gentianaceae)

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Abstract

Memecylon sisparens Gamble and *Swertia beddomei* C.B. Clarke were rediscovered from the Velliangiri hills of the Western Ghats in Coimbatore district, Tamil Nadu after 122 years and 135 years respectively of the type collections. They are new additions to the flora of Coimbatore district. Detailed descriptions are provided.

Keywords: *Memecylon sisparens*, *Swertia beddomei*, Rediscovery, Velliangiri hills, Tamil Nadu

Introduction

While conducting floristic investigation of the Velliangiri hills in the Western Ghats of Coimbatore district, Tamil Nadu, the authors collected two less known species *Memecylon sisparens* Gamble (Melastomataceae) and *Swertia beddomei* C. B. Clarke (Gentianaceae). They have not been reported after their type collections in 1884 and 1867 respectively. Both these species were originally described from the Sispara Ghats of the present Nilgiri district. Hence, they are new reports for Coimbatore district. They are described below.

Memecylon sisparens Gamble, Bull. Misc. Inform. Kew 1919: 227. 1919 & Fl. Pres. Madras 1:356. 1957 (repr.ed.); N.C. Nair & A.N. Henry in Fl. Tamil Nadu Series I. Analysis 1:161.1983; M.P. Nayar & A.R.K. Sastry in Red Data Book of Indian Plants 3: 180. 1990; Manoharan *et al.*, Silent Valley Whisp. Reason 159.1999; Sasidh., Biod. Doc. Kerala, Fl. Plant Part 6: 182. 2004.

Large shrub or small tree up to 10 m high; branchlets glabrous. *Leaves* 3-7.5x3-4 cm, sessile or shortly petioled; oblong or ovate-oblong, entire or slightly revolute at margins, rounded or slightly cordate at base, acute-obtuse at apex, lateral nerves 5-paired, inconspicuous. *Flowers* fascicled in single or very

short-peduncled cymes on lateral tubercles, or rarely axillary, bluish-red, c. 2.5 cm across; pedicels 3-4 mm long; calyx campanulate, 2-2.5 mm long, shortly 4 or 5-toothed; teeth acute, c. 1 mm long; petals 4, ovate, bluish-red, 1-1.5 x 1-1.5 mm; stamens 8, equal; filaments c. 1 mm long, broad at base; anthers short.; ovary 1-celled; ovules 8; style linear, c. 2 mm long. *Fruit* a globose or ellipsoid berry, 1-seeded.

Flowering & Fruiting: May- July.

Habitat: Shola floor, occasional.

Altitude: 1800 m.

Specimen Examined: INDIA, **Tamil Nadu**, Coimbatore district, Velliangiri hills, 24.06.2004, M. Murugesan 1047 (Kongunadu Arts and Science College Herbarium).

Distribution: India (Tamil Nadu, Kerala), endemic.

Swertia beddomei C. B. Clarke in Hook. f., Fl. Brit. India 4: 127. 1883; Gamble, Fl. Pres. Madras 2: 619. 1957 (repr.ed.); A.N. Henry *et al.*, Fl. Tamil Nadu Series I. Analysis 2: 96.1987.

Erect herb, up to 60 cm high; branchlets 4-angled, obscurely 4 winged. *Leaves* 1-3 x 0.8-2 cm, opposite-decussate, sessile, 3-5 ribbed, coriaceous, ovate-

orbicular, subamplexicaul at base, entire along margins, obtuse at apex. *Flowers* in densely paniced, flat topped terminal and axillary corymbs, blue lurid or white, 4-5 mm across with a nectary at base; peduncle c. 15 cm long; pedicel c. 2.5 cm long; calyx 4-partite, ovate-oblong or rarely lanceolate, 4-5 x 1-1.5 mm, prominently 3-5-nerved, obtuse or acute at apex, revolute at margins, minutely scaberulous; corolla rotate; lobes 4, overlapping and twisted in bud, elliptic-obovate, 6-7 x 1-3.5 mm, obtuse at apex, often inflexed along margins, lobes with a nectary at base; nectaries with fringed margins; stamens 4, epipetalous, inserted at base of corolla; filaments linear, ribbon-like, 2.8-3.5 mm long, dilated downwards; anthers oblong c.1x1 mm, black or pale green, versatile; ovary 1-celled, ellipsoid, 3.5-4.5x1-2 mm, ovules numerous, placentas slightly intruded; style short, 0.5-0.8 mm long; stigma bifid, capitate. *Fruit* an oblong, sessile, 2-valved capsule; seeds many, small.

Flowering & Fruiting: November-February.

Habitat: Open grasslands.

Altitude: 1700 m.

Specimen Examined: INDIA, **Tamil Nadu**, Coimbatore district, Velliangiri hills, 15.08.2004, M. Murugesan 302 (Kongunadu Arts and Science College Herbarium).

Distribution: INDIA (Kerala, Tamil Nadu), endemic, threatened (Ahmedullah & Nayar, 1987).

Acknowledgements

Authors are thankful to the Joint Director, Botanical Survey of India, Southern Circle, Coimbatore for permitting to consult the Herbarium and to Dr M. Aruchami, Secretary and Dr T. Kulandaivelu, Principal, Kongunadu Arts and Science College, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu for facilities.

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Received : 14.3.2006

Revised and accepted : 9.2.2007