



Original Research Article

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Memecylon royenii Blume (Olisbeoideae: Melastomataceae): A new record for Tamil Nadu, India

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Article Info

ABSTRACT

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Memecylon royenii Blume is collected for the first time for Tamil Nadu from Sirumalai Hills and reported as a new record for Melastomataceae of Tamil Nadu. A detailed description, phenology, distribution and ecology along with a photo are provided for its easy identification.

Keywords

Additional flora
Distribution
Eastern Ghats
Sirumalai hills

Introduction

Memecylon L. (Melastomataceae) is a palaeotropical genus and comprises more than 343 species (POWO, 2019). Das et al. (2018) have recognized 53 species from the present political boundary of India, while Vivekanandan (1983) has reported 18 species from Tamil Nadu. However, during the last few decades many new species have been discovered and added to the Melastomataceae of Tamil Nadu (Das et al., 2018; Manickam et al., 2007; Murugan and Gopalan, 2006; Murugan and Manickam, 2001; Murugan and Murthy, 2010; Murugan and Manickam 2000,

2001; Prabhu and Murugan, 2017; Pragasan and Parthasarathy, 2009; Udhayavani and Ramachandran, 2013; Viswanathan, 1995, 2001; Viswanathan and Manikandan, 2001; Viswanathan and Rajendran, 1993).

Taxonomically *Memecylon* is one of the most tricky group and the delimitation of species is mainly by traditional characters such as shape and size of leaves, position and nature of inflorescence, length of pedicels, shape and nature of cohesion of the calyx, and the presence or absence of disc rays (Kumar et al., 2004; Kottaimuthu and Vasudevan, 2015; Stone et al., 2014). Further, foliar sclereids

and the nature of the embryo are also used as aids in the identification of the taxa (Rao and Bhupal, 1974; Rao and Dakshni, 1963; Rao et al., 1980). While working on the flora of southern Eastern Ghats, the first author collected some interesting specimens of *Memecylon* from the semi-evergreen forests of Sirumalai Hills. After critical examination of the specimen with pertinent literature (Bremer, 1979, 1987) it is confirmed as *Memecylon royenii*. This Indo-Lankan species was so far reported only from the states of Andhra Pradesh (Murugan and Gopalan, 2006) and Kerala (Rajendraprasad et al., 2006). Hence the present collection constitutes a new report for Tamil Nadu and it is discussed hereunder in detail.

Memecylon royenii Blume, Mus. Bot. 1(23): 360. 1851; K. Bremer in Opera Bot. 50: 19. 1979 & in Dassanayakae & Fosberg, Rev. Handb. Fl. Ceylon 6: 221. 1987; Murugan & Gopalan in Indian J. Forest. 29(1): 107. 2006; M. Rajendraprasad & al. in Indian Forester 132: 229. 2006.

Small tree, up to 5 m high; branchlets terete. Leaves opposite, broadly lanceolate or oblong-lanceolate, 6.5–11 × 2–3.8 cm, apex shortly, sometimes obtusely acuminate, base cuneate, midrib prominent, sunken above, raised below, secondary veins obscure, 6–8 pairs, coriaceous, glossy above, yellowish below when dry, petiolate; petioles channeled on the upper side, petioles up to 7 mm long. Inflorescences axillary or in lateral, laxly branched umbels; peduncles 2–3 per node, terete, ridged, up to 5 cm long. Flowers small, ca. 5 mm across; bracts oblong or ovate-oblong, 1–2 mm long, persistent. Hypantho–calyx campanulate, 2–2.5 mm wide, 4–lobed; calyx-lobes triangular to sub-orbicular, apex rounded, margin thin, scarious, bluish. Petals 4, blue, orbicular, up to 3 mm long, rounded at apex, clawed at base. Disc red-colored with prominent radiating rays. Stamens 8; filaments blue, filiform, ca. 4 mm long; anther connectives 1–1.4 mm long, glandular. Ovary globose, 1 mm across, papillate; styles blue, filiform; stigma simple. Berries globose, 6–7 mm across, yellowish green when ripe.

Flowering & Fruiting: April-May.

Distribution: INDIA (Andhra Pradesh, Kerala and Tamil Nadu [present report]) and SRI LANKA.

Specimens examined: Tamil Nadu: Dindigul District; Sirumalai, on way to Kannadiparai, ca. 1080 m asl, 13.04.2009, RKM 63513 (Saraswathi Narayanan College Herbarium); Sirumalai, Nerkuthu Solai, 1120 m, 13.05.10, RKM 63515 (Saraswathi Narayanan College Herbarium).

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Conflict of interest statement

Authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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