

Original Research Article

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Microchirita hamosa (Gesneriaceae) – A new generic record to the flora of Telangana, India

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Article Info

Abstract

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Microchirita hamosa (R.Br.) Yin Z. Wang (Gesneriaceae) is reported here as an addition to the flora of Telangana, collected from Kinnerasani Wildlife Sanctuary and Kawal Tiger Reserve, Telangana. A detailed description, and a photo plate is provided to facilitate easy identification.

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Introduction

The genus *Microchirita* (C.B. Clarke) Yin Z. Wang. is represented by 39 species in the world (POWO, 2021). The genus is found to occur in India, Myanmar, southern China, Thailand, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Peninsular Malaysia, Sumatra, Java and Borneo. The species of the genus mostly found in moist rock crevices and under the shade of the trees in hill forest, and especially in limestone habitats (Puglisi & Middleton, 2017). In India, the genus is represented by 3 species viz., *Microchirita hamosa* (R. Br.) Yin Z. Wang, *M. cristata* (Dalzell) D. J. Middleton and *M. sahyadriensis* (Punekar & Lakshmin) A. Weber & D. J. Middleton, of which latter two species are endemic to peninsular India

and former species widely distributed in India (Dash & Mao, 2020).

While exploring the protected areas of Telangana, the authors have collected specimens of an interesting species from Kinnerasani Wildlife Sanctuary and Kawal Tiger Reserve. After a critical study, it has been identified as *Microchirita hamosa* (R.Br.) Yin Z. Wang.

The perusal of relevant literature (Pullaiah, 2015; Reddy & Reddy, 2016) revealed that this species was not reported from Telangana. Hence, it is reported here as new distributional record to the flora of Telangana state. A detailed description and photo plate is provided to facilitate its easy identification.

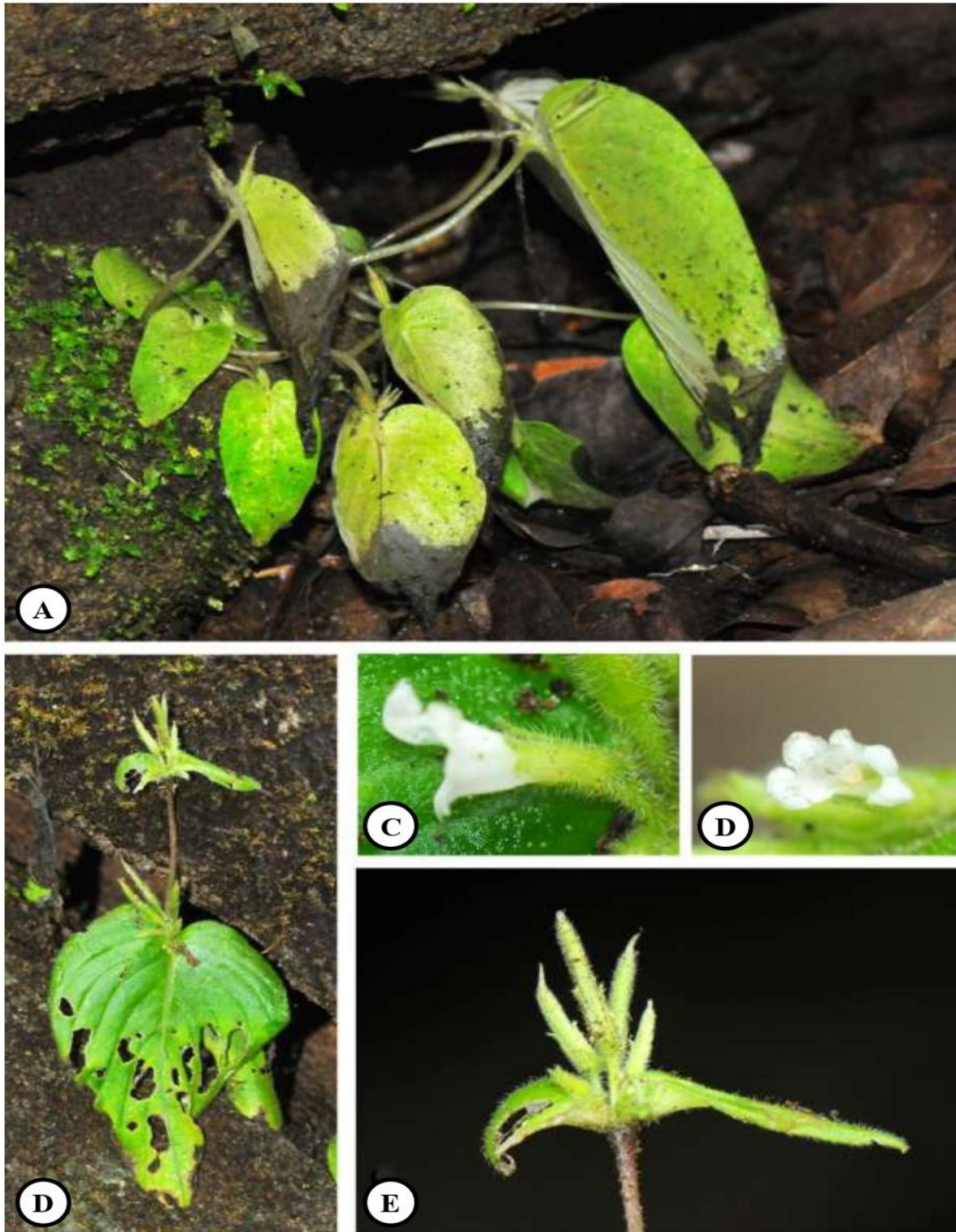


Fig. 1: *Microchirita hamosa* (R. Br.) Yin Z. Wang. A. Habitat; B. Habit; C. Flower-Side view; D. Flower – Top view; E. Capsules.

Taxonomic treatment

Microchirita hamosa (R.Br.) Yin Z.Wang in J. Syst.

Evol. 49: 60. 2011; Dash, S.S. & A.A. Mao, Fl. Pl. India Annot. Checkl. Dicot. 2: 258. 2020. *Chirita hamosa* R. Br., Cyrtandreae 117. 1839; Fl. Brit. India 4: 360. 1884.

Didymocarpus pygmaeus C.B. Clarke in A. DC. & C. DC., Monogr. Phan. 5 (1): 82.1883; C. B. Clarke in Hook. f., Fl. Brit. India 4: 345.1884; Gamble, Fl. Madras 2: 988 (694).1924 (Fig. 1).

Small annual, caulescent herbs up to 10 cm high. Stems succulent, straight or curved, weak, with long eglandular hairs, pale green or sometimes tinged with purple-brown. Leaves single or two, sub-opposite, alternate, subequal; at times a short stem opposite the single leaf, bearing 1–2 very small leaves; leaves sessile or shortly petioled, ovate to lanceolate, 2–10 × 1–5 cm, cordate at base in basal leaf, shortly attenuate at base in cauline leaves, entire along margin, acute at apex, densely eglandular tomentose above and beneath, 5–12 pairs of secondary veins. Flowers white, cristate, 1–4 or more, in axillary clusters; peduncles not fused with each other; bracts absent; pedicels pale green, pubescent, up to 10 mm long. Calyx green, regular, tube short, c. 2 mm long, lobes linear - lanceolate, 2–4 × 0.3–0.5 mm, eglandular hairy outside, glabrous inside except at the tip, elongated up to 7 mm long. Corolla 7–9 mm long; sparsely hairy on upper side, densely hairy on lower side; tube 6–8 mm long; lobes unequal, 0.5–1 mm long. Stamens white or pale yellow, inserted. Ovary glabrous or papillose in lower 1/3, densely pubescent in upper 2/3, many ovules; style densely pubescent; stigma shallowly bilobed. Capsules linear, acuminate at apex, green, 1–2 cm long, densely hairy, straight or slightly curved.

Flowering & fruiting

September–November.

Habitat

Occasional on moss-clad rocks and under the shade of trees in hilly mixed dry deciduous forests.

Distribution

Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala,

Madhya Pradesh, Meghalaya, Odisha, Rajasthan, Telangana and West Bengal. China, India, Laos, Myanmar, Northern and North-eastern Thailand and Vietnam.

Specimens examined

India, Telangana, Bhadrachari-Kothagudem District, Kinnerasani Wildlife Sanctuary, Regalla Range, Busurui North Beat, 17.86639° N, 80.65378° E, 258 m. s. l., 15.11.2021, J. Swamy 11998; Regalla Range, Mallepallythogu Beat, Compartment Number 44, 17.89245° N, 80.66727° E, 286 m. s. l., 18.11.2021, J. Swamy 9330 (BSID); Kawal Tiger Reserve, Kaghaznagar Division, Penchikalpet Range, Agarguda Beat, Near Kondengaloddi waterfall, 20.11.2021, E. Venkatesham, P. Prabhakar & S. Venugopal 4359 (BSID).

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