



REPORTING OF NEW PLANT SPECIES TO THE FLORA OF RAJASTHAN

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ABSTRACT

Antidesma ghaesembilla, *Erythrina suberosa sublobata* and *Musa rosacea* were recorded for the first time in the state of Rajasthan during surveys of Ranthambhore Tiger Reserve, Sawai Madhopur; Baran District and southern part of Rajasthan. These are new to the state and worth placing on records. *Spermadictyon suaveolens* already included in the flora of Rajasthan as a garden plant however grows naturally in the forests of southern part of the state and has naturalized like many other exotics.

Key words: Flora of Rajasthan, *Antidesma ghaesembilla*, *Erythrina suberosa sublobata*, *Musa rosacea*

The present report provides information on 3 species of flowering plants new to the flora of Rajasthan State. Various parts of state were visited in different seasons to collect the plant specimens which were taxonomically verified using various relevant floras and other scientific literature like Shah (1978), Almeida (1998 & 2009) and Krishen (2013).

Flora of Rajasthan has been documented by various taxonomists like Sharma and Tyagi (1979), Shetty and Panday (1983), Shetty and Singh (1987, 1991 & 1993), Bhandari (1990), Prasad et al. (1996), Sharma (2002), Tiagi and Aery (2007), Singh and Shrivastava (2007) and Yadav and Meena (2011). Perusal of above floras revealed that *Antidesma ghaesembilla*, *Erythrina suberosa sublobata* and *Musa rosacea* are new to the Rajasthan state and worth placing on records. *Spermadictyon suaveolens* already included in the flora of Rajasthan as a garden plant (Shetty & Singh 1987), but this species is growing in the wild in many protected areas and other forest blocks in southern part of Rajasthan. Hence, its status needs to be changed in the flora of the Rajasthan.

Details of the plant species new to flora of Rajasthan are as following:

1. *Antidesma ghaesembilla*, Gaertn. Family Phyllanthaceae

It is a tree species growing in many pockets of Central India where it is locally known as *Khatoi*, *Khatua*, *Jhondri* and *Manmakoiya* (Krishen 2013). This is a middle sized tree bearing simple, petiolate leaves, 5-10 cm long, relatively broad, more or less blunt at both ends. In the beginning, soft hairs are seen on the leaves but at maturity their upper surface becomes smooth but lower surface remains softly hairy. Male

and female flowers develop on separate trees in slender greenish – yellow, densely hairy, thin and erect spikes up to 7 cm long. Inflorescences develop at the ends of twigs or from axils of upper leaves. Fruits globose in appearance are slightly sour in the taste and are red-purple to very dark red berries (Photo 1, Krishen 2013).

A patch consisting of several trees of this species was seen in the “Karonji-ka-Nala (Chironji-ka-Nala)” near the motorable tourist path, inside the Ranthambhore Tiger Reserve. In this area, mature fruits can be seen on the trees from September to October. From distance, fruits of *A. ghaesembilla* look like that of fruits of Chironji or Karonji (*Buchanania lanzan*). Probably due to superficial similarity of fruits of *A. ghaesembilla* with *Buchanania lanzan* or due to mis-identification of the species, the *nalla*, where this species grows is locally called “Karonji-ka-Nala (Chironji-ka-Nala)” by the natives.

2. *Erythrina suberosa sublobata* (Roxb.) Baker, Family Fabaceae

Erythrina suberosa is a well-known tree species from Rajasthan (Singh 1983, Shetty and Singh 1987, Tiagi and Aery 2007). Nothing is mentioned about varieties of this species in the floras. Two varietal forms of *Erythrina suberosa* are present in the state. The commoner variety possesses leaflets with entire margins. While studying the biodiversity of Kundakhoh gorge near Shahabad town in Baran district, we came across *Erythrina suberosa sublobata* on the rocky eastern edge of Kundakhoh gorge near Shahabad ghati along Kota-Shahabad National Highway 76. *E. suberosa sublobata* has larger leaflets with conspicuously sinuated margins. This variety is said to be

found in subalpine jungle of western Peninsula (Almeida 1998). We recorded three plants of *E. suberosa sublobata* of various ages and heights there. By seeing teathed margins of leaflets, *sublobata* variety can be identified very easily.



Photo 1. *Antidesma ghaesembilla* in fruiting stage

3. *Musa rosacea* Jacq., Family Musaceae

Musa rosacea has slender and cylindrical stem up to 1-1.6 m high, 8-10cm in diameter. Sometimes even taller stems are seen if conditions are congenial. It is a stoloniferous herb which has an ability to develop into a patch within few years. Plant possesses petiolated linear-oblong leaves. Flowers develop in drooping spikes. Fruits smaller, of the size of a man's finger, linear-oblong, slightly incurved, obscurely 4-5 angled with many black, tuberculated seeds. When fruits are unripe, color of seeds remain paler or light yellow. From distance *Musa rosacea* looks like that of cultivated variety but its inflorescence is lesser in length. The middle part of the inflorescence axis remains covered by the dried bracts. Fruit size is quite smaller in *M. rosacea*.

Musa rosacea is seen at many localities in Sitamata Wildlife Sanctuary where it prefers to grow on the banks of perennial streams. Big patches of this species are present along the water courses near Bulbula Mahadeo of Sangrikheda out post area and Dhebar Shila Mahadeo zone in Satpura forest block (Harisingh-ka-Kheda out post area). Few years back, a large patch of *M. rosacea* was present near Valmiki Ashram area but due to grazing and trampling by cattle, now only few plants are left there. Patches of *Musa rosacea* can be seen near Gaparnath and many other places on rocky banks of the Chambal river in Hadoti area of eastern Rajasthan also.

4. *Spermadictyon suaveolens* Roxb., Family Rubiaceae

According to Shetty and Singh (1987) *Spermadictyon suaveolens* is a cultivated plant grown in the gardens for ornamental purpose. But this shrubby plant can be seen wild in Sajjangarh, Kumbhalgarh, Todgarh-Raoli Wildlife

Sanctuaries and other forest areas like Ramkunda, Ladan, Tinsara, Samoli, Khokhariya-ki-Nal, Nal Sandol, Som, Madri, Ubheshwar, Nal Mokhi, Jarga etc. forest blocks. Its wide distribution in forests of southern Rajasthan indicates that it has naturalized in many forested pockets where moisture regime is better.

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