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Notes on the occurrence of *Goniothalamus salicinus* (Annonaceae) in India

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Abstract

Goniothalamus salicinus Hook.f. & Thomson is strictly endemic to Sri Lanka. It is proved here that the earlier reports on the occurrence of *G. salicinus* in India are based on mistaken identity of *G. wightii*.

Keywords: Distribution, *Goniothalamus wightii,* India, Sri Lanka

Introduction

Goniothalamus (Blume) Hook.f. & Thomson is one of the largest paleotropical Asian genera in the family Annonaceae with over 130 species distributed over India, Sri Lanka to New Caledonia and Southeast Asia (Saunders & Chalermglin, 2008; Turner & Saunders, 2008). In India, the genus is represented by 13 species and 1 variety, and primarily distributed in the Western Ghats and northeastern India (Turner, 2015).

Hooker & Thomson (1855) described *G. salicinus* based on Walker's collection from Adams hill ranges in Sri Lanka. As a part of systematic study of the family Annonaceae of southern Western Ghats, it is noticed that the species, *G. salicinus* was first recorded by Rama Rao (1914) in his work on the 'Flowering Plants of Travancore' (Travancore was the erstwhile princely state comprising the southern districts of the Kerala and Tirunelveli and Kanyakumari districts of Tamil Nadu) based on the collection from Chemunji hills. Since then, the species was neither collected nor reported in any of the floristic studies from southern Western Ghats or elsewhere in India till today (Ramamurthy, 1983; Nair & Nayar, 1986; Mitra, 1993; Mohanan & Henry, 1994; Mohanan & Sivadasan, 2002; Manickam *et al*., 2008; Karthikeyan *et al*., 2009) except by Nayar *et al*. (2006, 2014), Kumar *et al.* (2013) and Turner (2015). During the present study, while examining the voucher specimens cited by Rama Rao (l.c.) in his work, housed at TBGT and University College Herbarium, Thiruvananthapuram, it was found *G. wightii* was wrongly identified as *G. salicinus* that led some of the recent workers (Nayar *et al*., 2006, 2014; Kumar *et al.,* 2013; Turner, 2015) to include in their works. Further an examination of two specimens of *G. salicinus* collected from from Sri Lanka deposited at MH [(*s.d., R.H. Beddome* s.n. (Acc. No. 60386); *s.d., s.coll.,* s.n. (Acc. No. 60387)] revealed that *G. wightii* is entirely a different species from *G. salicinus*. Thus it is concluded here that *G. salicinus* is endemic to Sri Lanka and not found in India.

These two species can easily be distinguished as given in the key below (**Fig. 1**):

Branches densely strigose with antrorsely purplish brown or blackish hairs; outer petals linear-triangular, 1.2–1.6 × 0.4–0.6 cm, long-acuminate at apex; fruits red . . . . . **G. salicinus**

Branches glabrous except young leaves; outer petals ovate, 0.8–1 × 0.5–0.7 cm, acute at apex; fruits yellowish orange . . . . . **G. wightii**

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Fig. 1. a, b. *Goniothalamus salicinus* Hook.f. & Thomson: a. Lectotype (K000691814); b. Lower surfaces of leaves showing venation (MH Acc. No. 60387); c–e. *Goniothalamus wightii* Hook.f. & Thomson: c. Lectotype (K000691811); d. A Bourdillon's specimen of G. wightii at Herbarium, University College, Thiruvananthapuram (Acc. No. 312); e. Lower surfaces of leaves showing venation (TBGT Acc. 02038).

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