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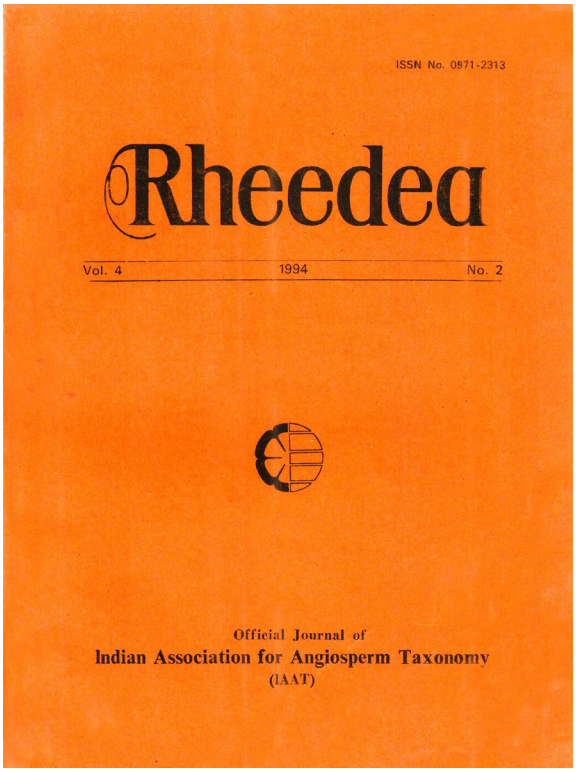
Purohit S.D., Ashish Dave & Y.D. Tiagi



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Chlorophytum borivilianum Sant. & Fern. (Liliaceae): an interesting species from the Aravallis in Rajastan

S. D. Purohit, Ashish Dave and Y. D. Tiagi

College of Science, Department of Botany,
M. L. Sukhadia University, Udaipur - 313 001

Abstract

Chlorophytum borivilianum Sant. & Fern., reported from Maharashtra and Gujrat and listed as a rare taxon in the Red Data Book on Indian Plants, has been found to be widespread in the Aravallis in Rajastan, extending its distribution.

During our forays in Aravallis during the last few years for floristic explorations, we collected a few specimens which closely resembled and is often confused with *Chlorophytum tuberosum*, but had sessile tubers (Fig. 1) and 3-nerved tepals. Later studies revealed that it differed from *C. tuberosum* in so many different ways (see Table 1) and is now identified as *Chlorophytum borivilianum*, which was originally described by Santapau and Fernandes (1955) from Salsette Island near Bombay. Since then, it has been reported from other parts of Maharashtra (Kothari & Hajra, 1983; Kothari & Moorthy, 1993) and Dang Forests of Gujrat (Shah & Suryanaryana, 1966).

This species though infrequent, has been found to be wide-spread along the Aravalli Hills in Rajastan and it is surprising that none of the earlier authors of the Flora of this state, including the most recent "Flora of Rajastan" (Shetty & Singh, 1993), have made a mention of it. Possibly they have misidentified it as *C. tuberosum* or have missed it because of its extremely short flowering period, which extends only for 7—10 days. The present report is a new record of this interesting species for the state of Rajastan.

Kothari and Hajra (1983), Shah (1983) and Ahamedulla and Nayar (1987) have listed this as a rare and threatened species endemic to Maharashtra and Gujrat, while Nayar and Sastry (1988) have entered it in the Red Data Book on Indian Plants. The present discovery, however, proves that it is not endemic to the above mentioned areas; insted it has a much wider distribution than expected. Neverthless, in the Aravallis also the plant is becoming increasingly rare due to rapid collection of its tubers for medicinal purposes.

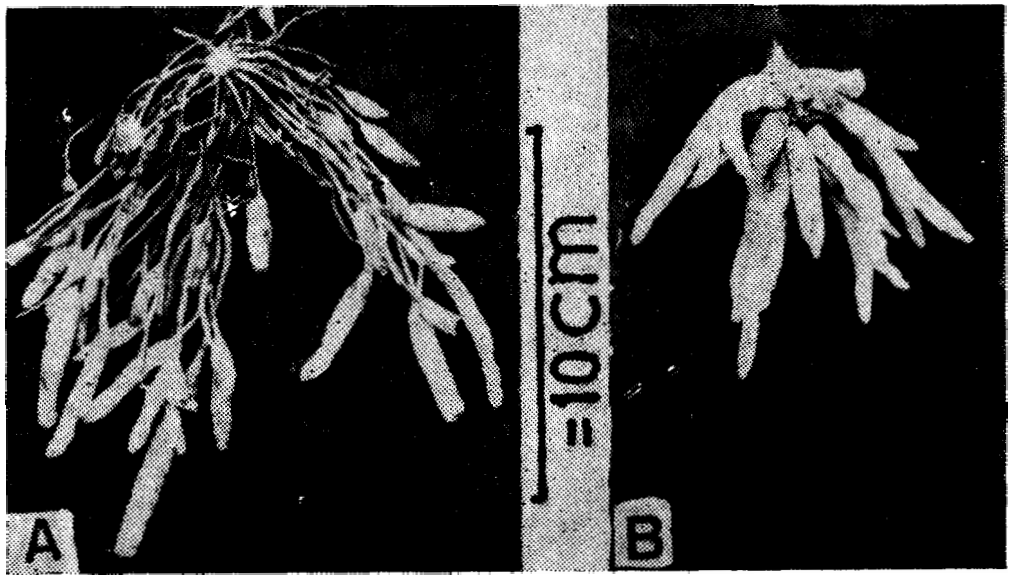

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Table 1 Showing comparison between *Chlorophytum borivilianum* and *C. tuberosum*

S. No.	Character	*C. borivilianum*	*C. tuberosum*
1.	Root tubers (Fig. 1		
	(i) Number per plant	8—10	Indefinite (mostly more than 20)
	(ii) Stalk	Sessile	Prominently stalked i.e. quite conspicuously distant from the base of the aerial shoot, as much as 6 cm or even more
	(iii) Length of tuber	5.0—18.0 cm or more	1.5—5.0 cm
	(vi) Shape	Cylindrical, slightly tapering near the tip	Elongated fusiform
2.	Leaf		
	(i) Length of leaf including the Sheath	60.0±30.0 cm	105.0 ± 35.0 cm
	(ii) Legth of blade	2.5±1.5 cm	3 5 ± 1.0 cm
3.	Length of raceme	30.0±7.0 cm	30.0±7.0 cm
4.	Flower		
	(i) Length of pedicel at anthesis	10.0±2.0 mm	13.0 ± 3.0 mm
	(ii) Colour of bract	Purplish	White
	(iii) Length of bract	20.0 ± 5.0 mm	15.0 ± 3.0 mm
	(iv) Length of bud at anthesis	15.0±3.0 mm	20.0±4.0 mm
	(v) Breadth of mature fruit	5.5±2.0 mm	6.0±3.0 mm
	(vi) Average length of style	10.0 mm	13.0 mm
	(vii) Average length of seed in T.S.	1.5 mm	2.5 mm
	(viii) Number of seeds per capsule	3—7	3—7
5.	Tepals		
	(i) Length of tepal	15 mm	15 mm
	(ii) Breadth of the tepal	2.5 mm	6.0 mm
	(iii) Shape	Linear lanceolate	Elliptic-elongate with a broad attachment
	(iv) Veins	3 parallel veins	9 parallel veins
6.	Anther		
	(i) Length of mature stamen	9.0 mm	11.0 mm
	(ii) Length of filament	4.0 mm	3.0 mm
	(iii) Average length of anther	5.0 mm	8.0 mm
	(iv) Type of filament	Bent below the anther attachment	Straight