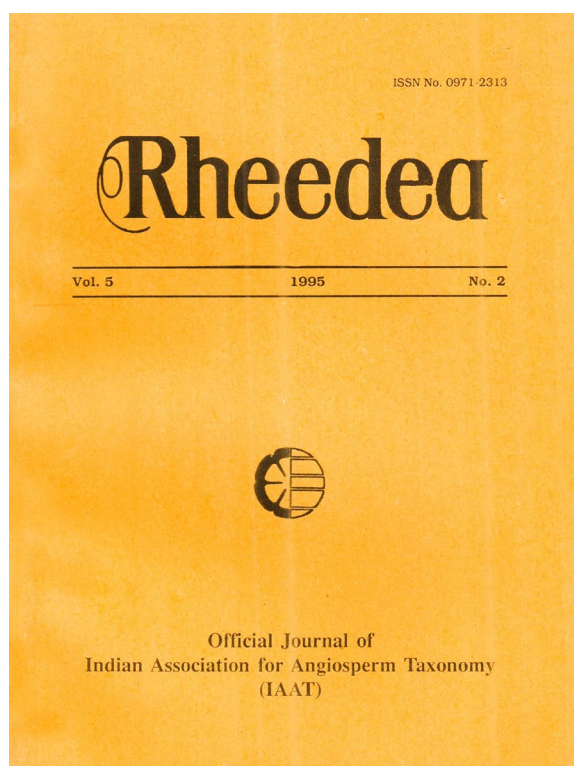




Cleome spinosa Jacq. (Capparaceae), a new record for Peninsular India

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***Cleome spinosa* Jacq. (Capparaceae), a new record for Peninsular India**

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Abstract

Cleome spinosa Jacq., a native of tropical America, has been reported to occur in the wild in West Bengal of India. This is the first report of this species in Peninsular part of the country.

Cleome spinosa Jacq., commonly known as the 'spider flower', distributed in tropical south America, southern United States and Africa, is widely cultivated in several parts of tropical Asia. In many places of its introduction, it has escaped cultivation and has got naturalised. In India, this taxon was first reported to have got naturalised in West Bengal (Paria, 1980). Since then, there has been no report of the species occurring in other parts of the country.

During our floristic explorations in Kerala, we found it growing wild along the wet banks of Sholayar and Karapara rivers in the Parambikulam wild life sanctuary. With its large, showy, evening-blooming deep pink flowers turning pale rose, it grows in large populations and can easily be distinguished from the closely similar and cultivated species, *Cleome speciosa* by its foetid smell, viscid hairy nature, absence of stipular spines and erect capsules. This species is reported here for the first time from Peninsular India.

Cleome spinosa Jacq., Enum. Pl. Craib. 26. 1760; Linn., Sp. Pl. 939.1763; Paria, Sci. Cult. 46: 27-28. 1980; Sundara Raghavan in Sharma & Balakr., Fl. India 2: 321. 1993.

(Fig. 1)

Erect, foetid herbs, 1-1.5 m tall, sparingly branched; younger parts viscid hairy. Leaves alternate, digitately 5-9- foliolate; petiole 5-13 cm long with scattered spines on the lower side; leaflets sessile, 6-13 x 1-3 cm, elliptic to lanceolate, acute or acuminate at apex, narrowed towards base, serrulate on the margins, glabrous above, pubescent and with spines on the midvein beneath. Flowers large, showy, deep pink turning pale rose, to 2-3 cm across, solitary in the upper axils and in apparent terminal, bracteate racemes; bracts foliaceous,

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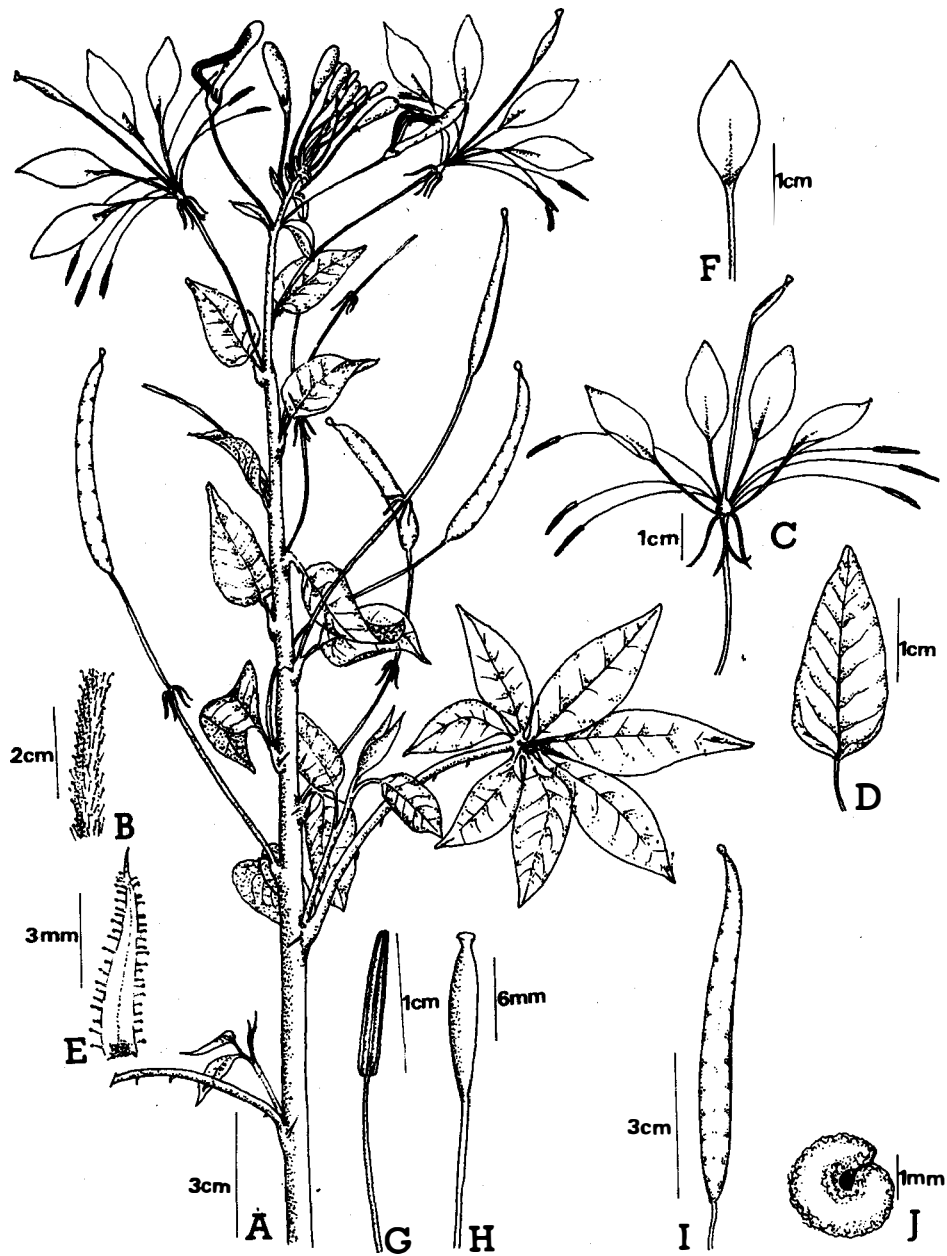


Fig. 1. *Cleome spinosa* Jacq. A. Flowering branch; B. A portion of young stem; C. Flower; D. Bract; E. Sepal; F. Petal; G. Stamen; H. Pistil with gynophore; I. Capsule; J. Seed.

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unifoliolate, smaller towards apex; pedicels erect, 2.5–3.5 cm in flower and 4.5 cm in fruits. Sepals 4, linear-lanceolate, 5.10 mm long, persistent and reflexed. Petals 4, long-clawed; claw 1–1.2 cm long, pink; limb elliptic to obovate, 1.5–2 x 1–1.3 cm. Stamens 6; filaments often longer than petals, pink, almost free from the base; anthers linear, basifixed, 7–9 mm long. Gynophore pink, 3.8 – 4.6 cm long in flowers, 6–8 cm in fruits; ovary linear-cylindric, 8 – 10 mm long; style short; stigma capitate. Capsules cylindric, green, 4 – 7 cm long. Seeds many, globose - reniform, pale, 2–2.5 mm across, faintly tubercled on the surface.

Ecology : Collected from the wet, exposed banks of Sholayar and Karappara rivers in Parambikulam wild life sanctuary. Not seen elsewhere.

Flowers and fruits: March – September.

Specimens studied : Sunil 2286, 2291 (CALI).

Note: Vijaya Kumar and Bahadur (1978), while studying the seed surface patterns in species of the genus, have reported two different types, one with smooth and the other with spiny tubercles. Our specimens having faintly tubercled seeds, probably are intermediates and indicate- \hat{A} that this character might be quite variable within the taxon.

Acknowledgement

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