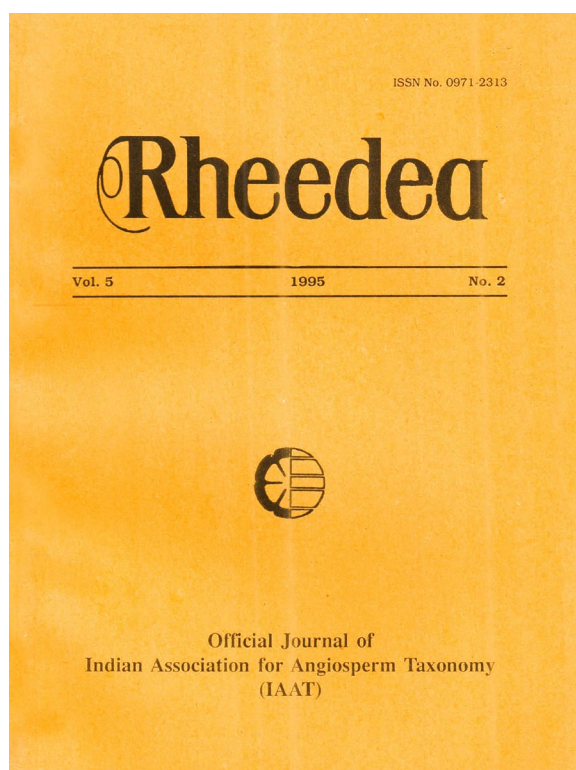




Desmodium scorpiurus (Swartz) Desvaux (Leguminosae-Papilionoideae): A new record for India

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***Desmodium scorpiurus* (Swartz) Desvaux
(Leguminosae–Papilionoideae) : A new record
for India**

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Abstract

Desmodium scorpiurus (Swartz) Desvaux (Leguminosae) is reported for the first time from India. Detailed description, illustration and relevant notes are provided.

During the course of floristic studies in Southern Peninsular India, we collected interesting *Desmodium* specimens from the coastal districts of Kerala which did not match with any; of the 48 species so far recorded from India (Sanjappa, 1992). After careful and critical studies, the specimen was referred to Dr. M. Sanjappa, who compared it with specimens at CAL and identified it as *D. scorpiurus* (Swartz) Desv., the type of the genus *Desmodium* Desv.

D. scorpiurus is a native of tropical America, but has been introduced and naturalized in several parts of the Asiatic Pacific (Ohashi, 1973). However, there is no record of the occurrence of this species in India so far. It is being reported as a new record here, and detailed description and figures are provided.

Desmodium scorpiurus (Swartz) Desvaux, Journ. de Bot. Ser. 2, 1:122. 1813; Merr., Philip. Journ. Sci. 5: 81. 1910 & Enum. Philip. Pl. 2: 289. 1923; Van Meeuwen, Reinwardtia 6: 101. 1961 et 258. 1962; Liu et Chuang, Thailwania 8:96, fig. 19. 1962; Ohashi, Ginkgoana 1: 95. 1973 (in obs.).

Hedysarum scorpiurus Swartz, Prodr. Veg. Ind. Occ. 107. 1788.

(Fig. 1)

Slender, trailing, pubescent herbs upto 1.5 m long. Stem sub-terete, clothed with minute hooked hairs; internodes 3–10 cm long; branches few. Leaves alternate, pinnately trifoliate; rachis 1.7–6.5 cm x 1–2 mm, minutely hooked hairy; stipules persistent, connate, amplexicaul, striate, auriculate at the base, acuminate at the apex on one side, pubescent and ciliate; leaflets subsessile, elliptic to ovate, obtuse at apex, entire, the terminal leaflet often larger, to 1.6–5.5 x 1–3 cm; stipels to 2 mm long, subulate, pubescent. Inflorescence racemose, 5–15 cm long, minutely pubescent, leaf-opposed, 12–22-flowered. Flowers to 5.5 x 4 mm in size, solitary or in clusters of 2–3 at nodes. Pedicels 4–5 mm long, filiform, patent hairy. Calyx hairy, to 3 mm long, campanulate with a short tube below; lobes 5, to 2.6 mm long, the two upper connate for most part except at the 2-toothed apex; others linear-lanceolate, the lower slightly

Dhruvan Tandyekkal and Philip Mathew

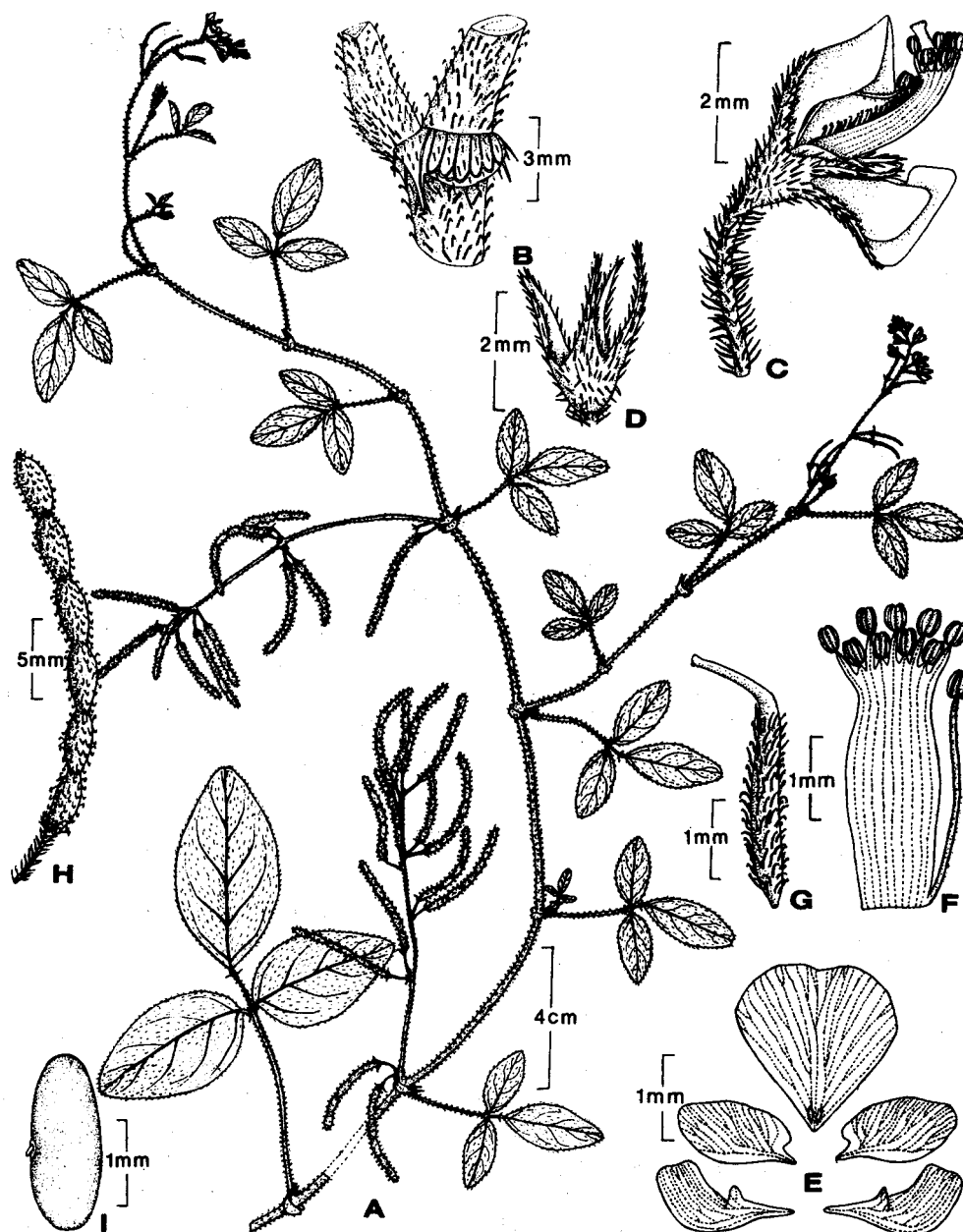


Fig.1. *Desmodium scorpiurus* (Swartz) Desv. A. Flowering shoot; B. Node showing stipule; C. Flower; D. Calyx; E. Petals; F. Staminal column spread out; G. Gynoeceium; H. Pod; I. Seed.

***Desmodium scorpiurus*, a new record for India**

larger. Corolla pink or white turning pale yellow; standard broadly obovate, 4.1 x 4.1 mm, slightly emarginate at apex, cuneate at the base; wings sub-elliptic, to 3.5 x 2 mm, rounded at apex, slightly auriculate and shortly clawed at the base; keels longer than the wings, to 4 x 1 mm, clawed, truncate or retuse at the apex, base with a thin lamellate appendage. Androecium diadelphous; staminal column to 3.5 mm long, closely set with minute, hooked hairs; style to 1 mm long, bent, glabrous; stigma capitate, glabrous. Pod linear, slightly turgid, intended on both the sutures, to 3.3 x 3.3 cm, densely hooked hairy, 4-7 jointed; articles oblong or somewhat obovate, to 4.5 x 2.3 mm, obscurely reticulately veined, easily detached. Seed oblong, sub-turgid, 3 x 1.3 mm, brown, smooth.

Flowers and fruits: December – July.

Distribution: Native of tropical America, introduced and naturalized in the pacific region of Asia and India (Kerala).

Specimens studied: Kerala: Kozhikode Dt.: Kozhikode town, *Dhruvan* 49882; Nallalam, *Dhruvan* 49885. Ernakulam Dt.: Ernakulam town, *Dhruvan* 49888 (CALI).

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