



Eleocharis ochrostachys (Cyperaceae), a new record for Andaman & Nicobar Islands with a note on the identity of *E. swamyi*

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Abstract

Eleocharis ochrostachys Steud. (Cyperaceae) is reported for the first time from Andaman and Nicobar Islands, India. The present paper provides a brief description, flowering and fruiting period, localities, habitat and a photoplate for easy identification. In addition, *Eleocharis swamyi* (as '*swamyi*') Govind. is relegated to a synonym of *E. ochrostachys*.

Keywords: Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Cyperaceae, *Eleocharis ochrostachys*, *E. swamyi*, new record

Introduction

During the floristic survey of Andaman and Nicobar Islands, some specimens of *Eleocharis* R.Br. were collected. After a perusal of relevant literature (Steudel, 1855; Hooker, 1894; Cook, 1996; Koyama, 1985) and critical analysis of specimens, identity of the species was revealed as *E. ochrostachys* Steud. A thorough scrutiny of literature (Rao, 1986; Cook, 1996; Pandey & Diwakar, 2008) revealed that this species has so far not been recorded from Andaman and Nicobar Islands and hence, reported here as a new record.

Comparison of *E. ochrostachys* with *E. swamyi* Govind. (Govindarajalu, 1985) revealed that all the characters of *E. swamyi* match with *Eleocharis ochrostachys*. Therefore, the former is conspecific with the latter.

Eleocharis ochrostachys Steud., Syn. Pl. Glumac. 2: 80. 1854; C.B. Clarke in Hook. f., Fl. Brit. India 6: 626. 1893; T. Koyama in Dassan. & Fosberg, Rev. Handb. Fl. Ceylon 5: 258. 1985; C.D.K. Cook, Aquat. Wetl. Pl. India 129, f. 124 a-d. 1996. *Scirpus laxiflorus* Thwaites, Enum. Pl. Zeyl. 435. 1864. *Eleocharis variegata* var. *laxiflora* (Thwaites) C. B. Clarke in Fl. Brit. India 6: 626. 1893. *E. swamyi* Govind. in Proc. Indian Acad. Sci., Pl. Sci. 94: 13. f. 2 a-i. 1985, **syn. nov.**

Fig. 1

Perennials; rhizomes and stolons creeping. Culms tufted, erect, 40–90 cm long, 1.5–2.5 mm across, terete or weakly angular, rigid, green to brown, smooth. Sheaths 2–3, 7–15 cm long, membranous, pale or tinged with red or brown, obliquely attenuate, acute at apex. Spikelets cylindrical to oblong-elongate, broader than culm, 1–3 cm long, 2.5–4 mm thick, many-flowered. Glumes ovate to ovate-oblong, 4–4.5 × 2–3 mm, obtuse to acute at apex, cartilaginous, loosely imbricate, green to yellow, mid vein prominent, lateral veins many, faint, broadly hyaline in upper half. Bristles 5–7, up to 2 times longer than nuts subequal, retrorsely scabrous throughout, yellowish or light brown. Stamens 2–3. Style 1.5–2 mm long, 2–3-cleft; base pyramidal, 1–1.5 mm wide. Nut orbicular to suborbicular 1.4–1.8 × 1.2–1.6 mm, 3-angled to unequally biconvex, longitudinally striate with 18–26 rows of transversely elongated cells on each face, straw-brown to grayish, glossy, apex contracted, annulate with a short neck.

Flowering & Fruiting: October – January.

Habitat: Found in shallow waters and marshes in association with *Eriocaulon* sp., *Eriocaulon truncatum*, *Fimbristylis quinquangularis*, *Ludwigia*



Fig. 1. *Eleocharis ochrostachys* Steud.: a. Habit; b. Spikelets; c. Glume; d. & e. Nuts.

hyssopifolia, *Sacciolepis myosuroides*, *Utricularia caerulea* and *U. uliginosa* .

Distribution: World: Australia, Cambodia, China, Fiji, India (Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and now in Andaman & Nicobar Islands), Indonesia, Japan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Micronesia, Myanmar, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Samoa, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, Province of China, Thailand and Viet Nam.

Specimens examined: INDIA, **Andaman & Nicobar Islands**, Trinket Island, 10.12.2014, *A.N. Chandore* 1925 (SUK); 10.12.2014, *M.Y. Kamble* 32177 (PBL); **Andhra Pradesh**, Kambakkam, 06.11.1965, *E. Govindarajalu* 8016 C & G (MH). SAMOA, **Samoan Islands Jus**, Upolu, 03.1880, *Graeffe*, 1239 K (K000307753), image. INDONESIA, **Indonesia Java**, *Zollinger*, H. 291 K (K000307921), image. SRI LANKA, **South of the isle**, *Thwaites*, G.H.K. 3762 K (K000592588), image.

Note: The specimens 8016 C & G, PCM (Acc. no. MH- 174016, 174018) were collected by *E. Govindarajalu* from Kambakkam of Andhra Pradesh on 6th November 1965 and he identified it as *Eleocharis fistulosa* Schult. which is reduced to a synonym under *E. acutangula* (Roxb.) Schult. that can easily be identified by its triangular stem. Later the same specimens were described by him as *E. swamyii* in 1985.

Critical study of the type specimens and protologue of *E. swamyii* (Isotypes 8016 C & G, PCM; Acc. no. MH- 174016, 174018) revealed that *Govindarajalu* compared it with *E. variegata* (Poir.) C. Presl. both of which are clearly distinguishable. But the characters of *E. swamyii* match with *E. orchostachys* Steud., and hence cannot be treated as a distinct species. Therefore, *E. swamyii* Govind. is treated here as a *synonym novo* of *E. orchostachys* Steud.

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