Chapter-13

Justicia Brasiliana Roth (Acanthaceae) A New Exotic Species Record For The Flora Of Maharashtra, India

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Abstract
Justicia brasiliana Roth (Acanthaceae) is documented here for the first time from the state of Maharashtra, India. Field investigations in Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar District confirmed its occurrence in semi-urban habitats. Detailed diagnostic characters, habitat notes, possible pathways of introduction, and its naturalization potential are presented. The report emphasizes the need for monitoring exotic Acanthaceae species to prevent future invasiveness in the region.
Keywords: *Acanthaceae, exotic species, alien plant, first report, Maharashtra, Justicia brasiliana, Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar*

Introduction

The genus Justicia L. Is pantropical with c. 600 species worldwide (Mabberley, 2017). Many taxa under the family Acanthaceae have escaped cultivation and become naturalized in India (Singh et al., 2020). Justicia brasiliana, an ornamental shrub native to South America (Roth, 1821), is known for medicinal and horticultural value (Corrêa & Alcântara, 2012).

This paper presents the first confirmed occurrence of this exotic species in Maharashtra.

Materials and Methods

Field surveys were conducted in Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar District, Maharashtra . Fresh specimens were collected and processed following standard herbarium protocols (Bridson & Forman, 1998). Species identification was confirmed using protologue descriptions, authenticated herbarium images, and taxonomic databases (POWO, Tropicos).Voucher specimens are deposited in the Herbarium, Dept. Of Botany, R.F.N.S. Senior Science College, Akkalkuwa (VRJ-4002).

Enumeration of Plant

Justicia brasiliana Roth Nov. Pl. Sp. 17 (1821).

Shrub perennial 3 m tall; stems erect, green to purplish, slightly 4-angled, sparsely pubescent. Leaves opposite, ovate-elliptic, 5–11 × 2–5 cm, apex acute to acuminate, base cuneate, margins entire; petiole 0.3–2 cm. Inflorescences terminal and axillary spikes; bracts conspicuous, reddish-purple, 1–2.3 cm long. Flowers zygomorphic, corolla tubular and curved, 2–2.4 cm long, bright magenta to pink; calyx 5-lobed, narrow. Stamens 2; stigma 2-lobed. Capsule 1.3–2 cm long, with 4 compressed, granulate seeds.

Flowering **:** June- December

Fruiting **:** August-January

Justicia brasiliana Roth

Exsiccata **:** VRJ 4002,Chhatrapati Sambhaji Nagar.

Localities **:** Chhatrapati Sambhaji Naga**r** Pune, Mumbai, Thane, Nagpur.

Native **:** South America

Uses:

Traditionally used for:

Fever reduction

Swelling and inflammation
Analgesic uses (headache & muscle pain)
Indigestion & stomach ailments
Cough and cold treatment
Wound healing(Corrêa & Alcântara, 2012; Khare, 2007)



Discussion

The presence of J. Brasiliana indicates recent spread through ornamental horticulture. Its ability to thrive in disturbed habitats suggests medium invasiveness potential. Early documentation and monitoring are essential to prevent displacement of native flora, aligning with recommendations for exotic species management in India (Singh et al., 2020).

Notes

Requires monitoring due to exotic origin.
Comparison with regional Justicia species recommended for early detection of spread.
Awareness and restricted planting are suggested if naturalization expands.

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