37. *ACTINODAPHNE SESQUIPEDALIS* (LAURACEAE) – A NEW RECORD FOR INDIA FROM ANDAMAN ISLANDS

(With nine text-figures)

From the plant collections made during the botanical exploration in Mount Harriet hill ranges (South Andamans), an interesting *Actinodaphne* species was collected from the southern hill slopes of Shoal Bay area. After critical studies the specimen was identified as *Actinodaphne sesquipedalis* (Wall. ex O. Ktze.) Hook. f. & Thoms. ex Meissn., hitherto not known from India. This species was earlier known from Tenasserim and Penang.

Actinodaphne Nees includes 60-70 species (Airy Shaw 1973). The genus is distributed in Indo-Malaysia and east Asia. 15 species have been reported for India (Santapau and Henry 1973). Vasudeva Rao (1986) listed two species, viz. *Actinodaphne madroptera* Miq. from Andamans and *A. procera* Nees from Nicobars. To facilitate identification, a detailed description of the plant along with nomenclatural citation, distribution and figures is given below.

Actinodaphne sesquipedalis (Wall. ex O. Ktze.) Hook. f. & Thoms. ex Meissn. in DC. Prodr. 15(1): 216. 1864; Hook. f., Fl. Brit. India 5: 151. 1886; Gamble, Man. Ind. Timb. ed. 2: 569. 1902; Brandis, Ind. Trees 535. 1906; Ridley, Fl. Mal. Pen. 3: 107. 1924; Kosterm., Bibl. Laurac. 40. 1964. *Laurus sesquipedalis* ex O. Ktze., Rev. Gen. Pl. 2: 570. 1891 (Figs. 1-9).

Trees, 8-10 m high; bark smooth; young branches woolly tomentose; terminal bud scales 0.2-2.0 x 0.4-1.0 cm, semi-orbicular to oblanceolate, acute at apex, obtuse at base, woolly, brownish, tomentose without, glabrous within. Leaves 23-40 x 9-21 cm, whorled, elliptic or oblanceolate, coriaceous, coppery brown when dry, glossy, puberulous or glabrescent above, subglaucous beneath, acute to acuminate at apex, cuneate or rarely oblique at base, entire at margins, midrib flat and glabrous above, impressed and woolly tomentose beneath, lateral nerves 10-15 pairs, running obliquely towards margins, slightly impressed and glabrous above, impressed and woolly tomentose beneath, secondary nerves lax, scalariform and faint above, prominent beneath, tertiary nerves faintly visible on both sides; petioles 2.5-4.0 cm long, stout, woolly tomentose. Inflorescences cauliflorous, rarely axillary.

Flowers unisexual, golden brown, in peduncled clusters, each peduncle bearing bracteate umbellules of 4-5 sessile to shortly pedicelled flowers, peduncles *c.* 0.5 cm long, golden brownish tomentose; involucral bracts 4, *c.* 0.3 x 0.2 cm, elliptic, golden brownish tomentose without, glabrous within; perianth *c.* 0.5 x 0.4 cm, in two rows, golden brownish tomentose without, glabrous within; staminodes 13-15, *c.* 0.1 x 0.05 cm, ovate or glandular, shortly stalked with a few long hairs intermingled with numerous hairs projecting from torus; ovary *c.* 0.2 x 0.05 cm, solitary, flask-shaped, with a few long hairs on one side, slightly sunken in torus, style horse-shoe shaped, stigma capitate.

Flowers: May.

Distribution: Tenasserim; Penang; INDIA: South Andamans.

Specimen examined: South Andamans, Shoal Bay (Mount Harriet hill range), 16 May 1990, *Sam P. Mathew* 20503 (*PBL*).

Ecology: Rare in inland evergreen forests.

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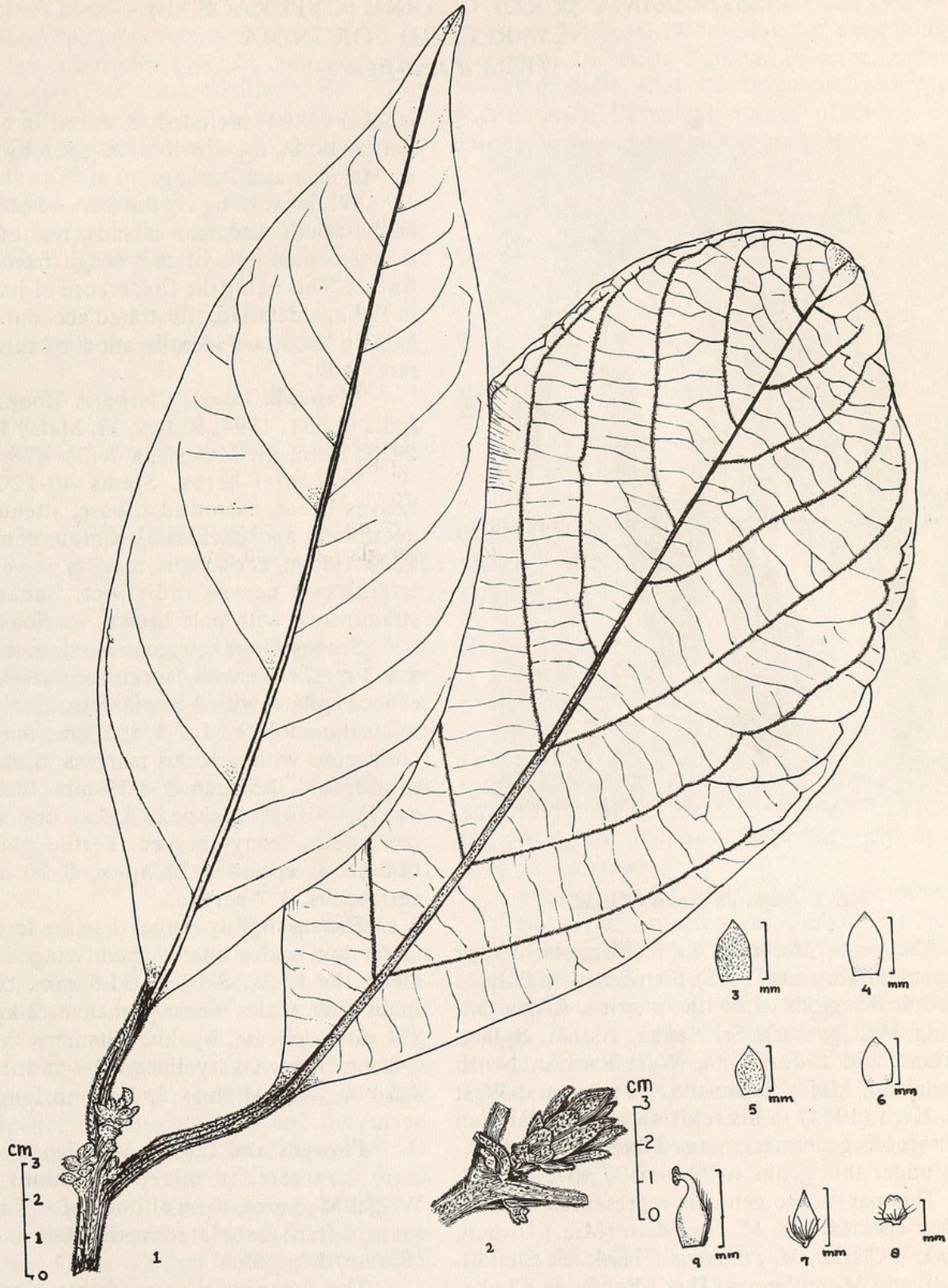
SAM P. MATHEW
May 27, 1991 P. LAKSHMINARASIMHAN

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Figs. 1-9. *Actinodaphne sesquipedalis* (Wall. ex O. Ktze.) Hook. f. & Thoms. ex Meissn.
1. Habit, 2. Terminal bud scales, 3. Bract (dorsal view), 4. Bract (ventral view), 5. Perianth (dorsal view), 6. Perianth (ventral view), 7 & 8. Staminodes, 9. Ovary.



Mathew, Sam P and Lakshminarasimhan, Pakshirajan. 1992. "Actinodaphne sesquipedalis (Lauraceae): A new record for India from Andaman Islands." *The journal of the Bombay Natural History Society* 89, 272–273.

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