CEROPEGIA ANANTII (ASCLEPIADACEAE), A NEW SPECIES FROM WESTERN GHATS, INDIA[1]

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Ceropegia anantii Yadav, Sardesai and Gaikwad sp. nov., discovered from Salva Hill in Western Ghats (Sindhudurg District, Maharashtra State), is described with illustrations.

Key words: *Ceropegia anantii*, new species, Asclepiadaceae, Western Ghats

The genus *Ceropegia* L. (Asclepiadaceae) is represented in India by about 48 species (Jagtap and Singh 1999) of which 28 are endemic to the country (Ansari 1984; Ahmedullah and Nayar 1986; Jagtap and Singh 1999). Western Ghats is an important centre for diversification of *Ceropegia* and harbours about 35 species of which 22 are endemic to the region (Yadav 1996). The majority of the endemic species are restricted to small areas and some of them are known only from their type localities. Many of them are on the way to extinction. An interesting species of *Ceropegia* allied to *C. attenuata* L. was collected from Salva Hills in September 1998, which is described and illustrated here.

Ceropegia anantii Yadav, Sardesai and Gaikwad sp. nov.

Ceropegia attenuata proxime affinis sed corollae lobo ad basim utrinque atro-brunneus maculatus, corolla tubo anguste, ad basim abrupte ampliata et lucis fenestrum distincte differt. Typus: India, Maharashtra, ditionis Sindhudurg, Collinum Salva, Yadav-495A (Holotypus CAL), Yadav-495B (Isotypus K), Yadav-495C (Isotypus BSI), Yadav-495D (Isotypus Blatt.), Yadav-495E (Isotypus SUK).

Ceropegia anantii Yadav, Sardesai and Gaikwad sp. nov. is closely allied to *C. attenuata* L. but differs in having a dark brown spot on basal portion on either side of corolla lobe, narrow corolla tube with abruptly dilated basal part and distinctive light windows (Table 1).

Type: India, Maharashtra State, Sindhudurg district, Salva Hills, Yadav-495A (Holotype CAL), Yadav-495B (Isotype K), Yadav-495C (Isotype BSI), Yadav-495D (Isotype Blatt.), Yadav-495E (Isotype SUK).

Perennial erect herb. Rootstock tuberous, tubers 2-3 cm in diameter, depressed, roots fibrous. Stem sparingly hairy, terete, usually unbranched, 15-40 cm in height, 1-2 mm in diameter. Leaves opposite, subsessile, minutely puberulous, linear, 4-8 x 0.3-0.5 cm, acute at apex, tapering at base, scabrous on upper surface, glabrous on lower surface except the midrib, margins minutely hairy. Flowers solitary, axillary or extra axillary; pedicel 4-6 x 0.6-0.8 mm, pubescent; bracts solitary, attached a little above the middle of pedicel, linear, 2.3-2.6 x 0.3-0.4 mm, acute. Sepals 5-7 x 0.7-0.8 mm, linear, subacute, pubescent. Corolla 4-6.5 cm long, straight, greenish-yellow; corolla tube 1-2.5 cm long, abruptly dilated at the base, glabrous, greenish outside, the lower inflated portion dark purple in throat and striated with purple lines in lower portion; corolla lobes up to 1.3-3.5 cm long, connate at tips, forming a long beak, greenish-white, pubescent inside, each lobe with dark spot on either side in basal part of corolla lobe. Gynostegial corona cupular, consisting of 5 deeply bifid lobes, densely ciliate on the margins; staminal corona of 5 linear lobes, connivent, erect, 4-5 mm long. Pollen masses yellow, attached to the brown pollen carriers by short caudicles, each pollinarium 0.3-0.35 x 0.2-0.25 mm. Follicles single or double, up to 6-7 x 0.2-0.25 cm, straight, tapering to a fine point, erect. Seeds 4 x 1.5 mm, ovate, oblong; coma 1-1.5 cm long, white, silky.

Fl. & Fr.: August-November.

Local Name: Ghayal.

Distribution: Restricted to flat tops of Salva Hills in Sindhudurg district of Maharashtra State. About 300 individuals were located in September 1998.

Etymology: The species is named after Prof. Anant R. Kulkarni, Mumbai for his valuable contribution to botany, especially angiosperm systematics.

Ceropegia anantii Yadav, Sardesai and Gaikwad sp. nov. is closely allied to *C. attenuata* L. but differs in the following characters (Figs 1-2):

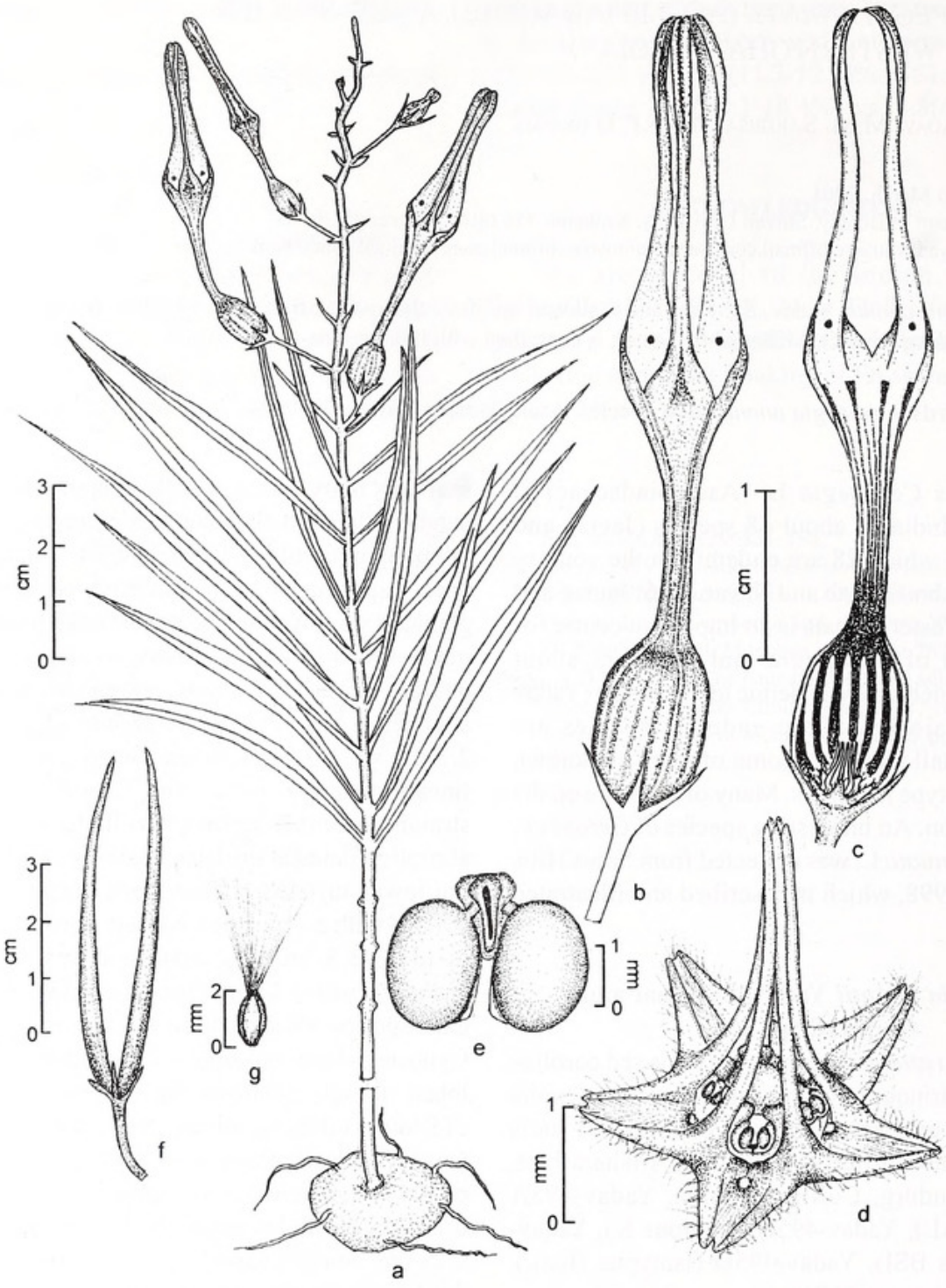


Fig. 1: *Ceropegia anantii* Yadav, Sardesai and Gaikwad sp. nov., a. Habit, b. Flower, c. L.S. of flower showing light windows, d. Corona, e. Pollinarium, f. Follicles, g. Seed with coma

Table 1: Differences in characters in *Ceropegia anantii* and *Ceropegia attenuata*

S. No.	*Ceropegia anantii* Yadav, Sardesai and Gaikwad sp. nov.	*Ceropegia attenuata* L.
1.	Grows on plateaus at higher altitudes	Grows on coastal plains of lateritic plateaus at lower altitudes
2.	Leaves narrowly linear	Leaves linear to lanceolate
3.	Narrow corolla tube abruptly dilated at base	Corolla tube gradually dilated at base
4.	Dilated corolla tube with brown rim in upper portion	Dilated corolla tube without brown rim in upper portion
5.	Corolla tube with dark brown spot on basal portion on either side of corolla lobe	Corolla tube without dark brown spots
6.	Corolla lobes cohering from base to apex	Corolla lobes free except at apex

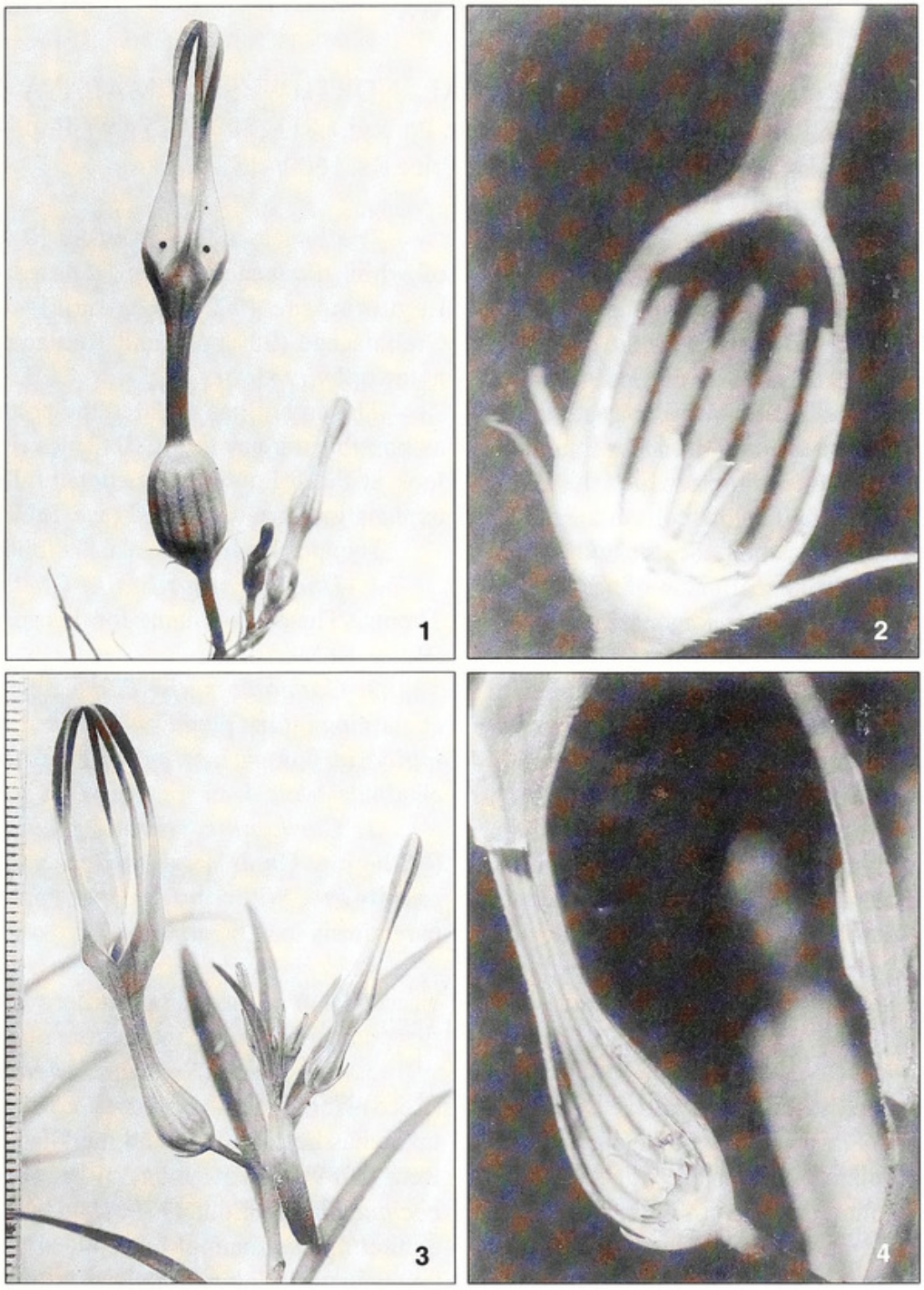


Fig. 2: *Ceropegia anantii* Yadav, Sardesai and Gaikwad sp. nov.,
1. Flowers, 2. L.S. of flower showing light windows;
Ceropegia attenuata Hook., 3. Flower, 4. L.S. of flower showing light windows

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We thank Dr. M.K. Vasudeva Rao, Botanical Survey of India, Western Circle, Pune for Latin diagnosis, the Head, Department of Botany for laboratory facilities, Mr. Girish Potdar for illustrations and Department of Science and Technology for financial assistance.

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