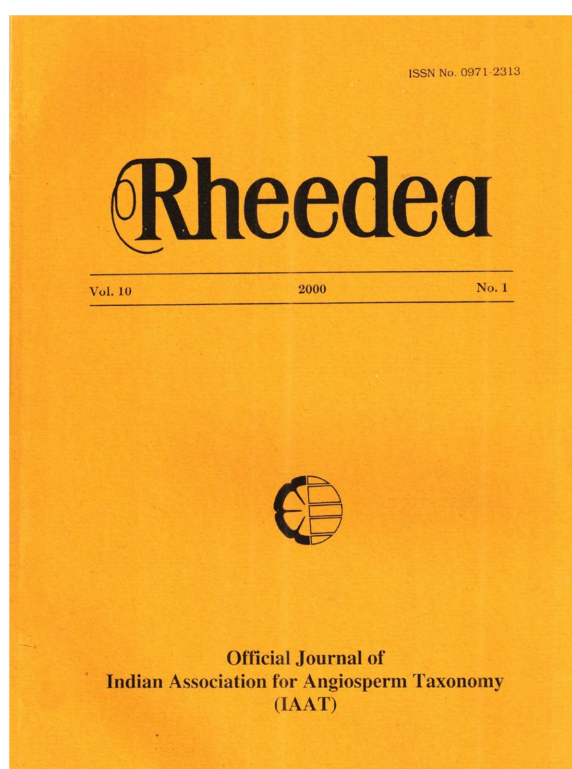




Rediscovery of *Schefflera bourdillonii* Gamble (Araliaceae): An endemic species from Agasthiyamalai and its Environs, Southern India

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How to cite:

Gopalan R., Chelladurai V., & M.P. Subramanian 2000. Rediscovery of *Schefflera bourdillonii* Gamble (Araliaceae): An endemic species from Agasthiyamalai and its Environs, Southern India. *Rheedeia* 10(1): 69-71.

<https://dx.doi.org/10.22244/rheedeia.2000.10.01.08>

Published in print: 30.06.2000

Published Online: 01.01.2022

Rediscovery of *Schefflera bourdillonii* Gamble (Araliaceae): An endemic species from Agasthiyamalai and its Environs, Southern India

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Abstract

Schefflera bourdillonii Gamble (Araliaceae) an endemic species is recollected from Agasthiyamalai (Pothigaimalai) and described with illustrations.

INTRODUCTION

Gamble (Kew Bull. 1919: 228) described *Schefflera 'bourdillonii* based on Bourdillon's collection No. 576 dated April 1895 from Chemunjee, and stated '*Fructus ignotus*'. Henry *et al.* (1978) have included this species in the list of 224 species of flowering plants presumably in danger of extinction of Peninsular India.

During the study on Conservation Assessment and Management Plans (CAMP) for the strict Endemic Plants of Agasthiyamalai (Pothigaimalai) and its environs this tree was recollected after a lapse of 95 years from Sangumuthirai and Poonkulam along the eastern slopes, away from the type locality, in crevices of rocks. The fruits were also collected and described for the first time.

Schefflera bourdillonii Gamble, Kew Bull. 1919: 228. 1919 & Fl. Pres. Madras 570. 1919 (1: 403. 1957 repr. ed.); Henry *et al.*, J. Bombay Nat. Hist. Soc. 75(3): 1978; Vajravelu & Daniel in Jain & Sastry, Mat. Cat. Threat. Pl. India 22. 1983; Mohanan & Henry, Fl. Thiruvananthapuram 216. 1994; Nayar, 'Hotspots' Endem. Pl. India, Nepal & Bhutan 98 & 198. 1996 (Fig. 1).

Lithophytic or epiphytic small trees, 2-5 m tall, glabrous, unarmed; branchlets lenticellate. Leaves digitately compound; ligule short, bicuspid; petioles 3-8 cm long, striated with small basal sheath with scattered glands; petiolules 5-20 mm long (lateral shorter, terminal longer), minutely 4-winged; leaflets 5-7; lamina oblanceolate-obovate (lateral leaflets

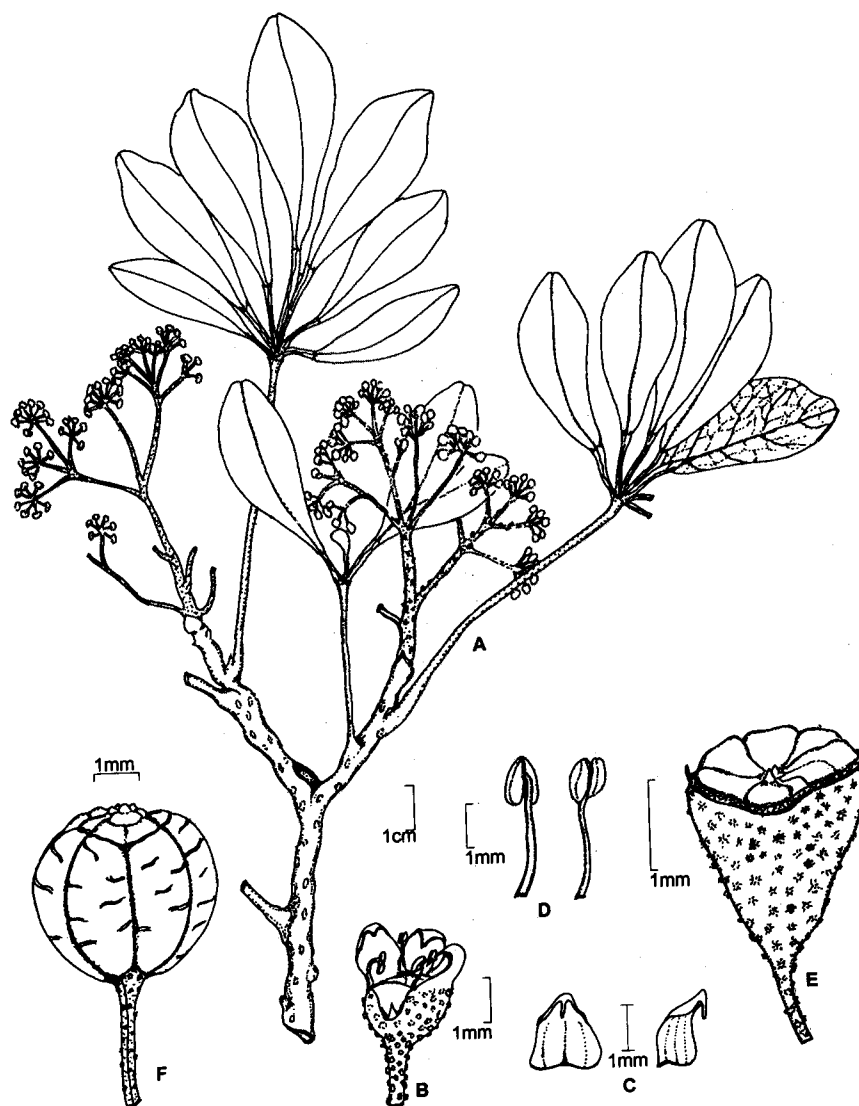
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Fig. 1. *Schefflera bourdillonii* Gamble: A. Flowering twig; B. Flower; C. Petal (ventral & side view); D. Stamen (dorsal & ventral view); E. Pistil; F. Fruit (All drawn from Gopalan 93272, 96227, 99331).

Rediscovery of *Schefflera bourdillonii* Gamble

obliquely elliptic), 2-4.5 x 0.9-1.9 cm, cuneate at base, entire and slightly recurved along margins, emarginate (and 3-5-toothed) near apex; nerves 3-5 pairs. Inflorescence umbellate in terminal panicles, up to 7 cm long; rachis stellately white pubescent; pedicels *ca.* 2 mm (-5 mm in fruit). Flowers 4 or 5-merous. Calyx tube urceolate, 1-2 x 1-2 mm; lobes 4 or 5, minute. Petals 4 or 5, maroon or dark purple, obliquely truncate, 1-2 x 1-2 mm, broadly oblique at base, entire, acute and mucronate at apex, tip incurved. Stamens 4 or 5. Ovary dark purple, stellately white pubescent, turbinate-obconic, 1-2 x 1-2 mm, 5-loculed; stigma 4-5, globose. Disc fleshy. Fruit ellipsoid or subglobose, *ca.* 4 x 4 mm, 5-ribbed, surmounted by 4-5 stigmas.

Fl. & Fr.: March - November.

Specimens examined: TAMIL NADU: Tirunelveli Dt.: Poonkulam, 1200 m, 25 April 1990, Gopalan 93272; *ibid*: 3 April 1991, Gopalan 96227; *ibid*: 19 April 1992, Gopalan 99331 (MH); Sangumuthirai, 1200 m, 10 April 1985, Padmasorna Subramanian & Chelladurai 3564 (SMPU-S).

Acknowledgements

Thanks are due to Dr. P. Daniel, Deputy Director, Botanical Survey of India, Southern Circle, Coimbatore for encouragement; and Dr. A.N. Henry, Scientist Emeritus for helpful suggestions. The second and third authors thank the Director, Central Council for Research in Ayurveda and Siddha, New Delhi for encouragement and official support.

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