



Leea adwivedica (Leeaceae), a new species from the Andaman Islands, India

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***Leea adwivedica* (Leeaceae), a new species from the Andaman Islands, India**

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Abstract

A new species of *Leea* Royen ex L., viz. *L. adwivedica* is described and illustrated

INTRODUCTION

During an exploration for endemic plants of the North Andaman Islands in early nineties, the author came across an arborescent and spinescent species of *Leea* Royen ex L. in the island forests along seasonal fresh water streams near to the littoral zone on the East coast of North Andaman Islands. It does not resemble with any of the known species of *Leea* and then the material was referred to Dr. S.K. Murthy, Indian Liaison officer at Kew who confirmed its novelty.

The genus *Leea* has about 34 species distributed in the Old World tropics (Mabberley, 1997). Among them, six species are known from Andaman and Nicobar Islands (Rao, 1986; Lakshminarasimhan & Rao, 1996). Ridsdale (1974) while revising the family, Leeaceae, recognised three spinous species of *Leea*, viz., *L. angulata* Korth. ex Miq., *L. aculeata* Bl. ex Spreng. and *L. spinea* Desc., of which the former is known to occur in the Nicobar Islands. Parkinson (1923) had observed (but not named), "there is also another *Leea*, found in these islands. A small tree (15-30 x 1-2), the stems armed with rows of prickles. Leaves bipinnate; leaflets up to 9 in. long Middle Andaman, on the last coast, north of Betapur, and on Havelock Island." The author's collection is from an area close to this region and matches well with Parkinson's (l.c) observation. The species is described here as new.

***Leea adwivedica* Krishna Kumar, sp. nov. (Fig. 1).**

Differt a *Leea angulata* Korth. ex Miq. et *L. aculeata* Bl. ex Spreng. habitu arboreo. Similis *L. spinea* Desc. etiam arboreo, tamen differt: Ramis ramulisque inermis, nisi ramulis juvenissimis; petiolis laminisque glabris; calyce et corolla pubescentis and antheris filamentis brevis.

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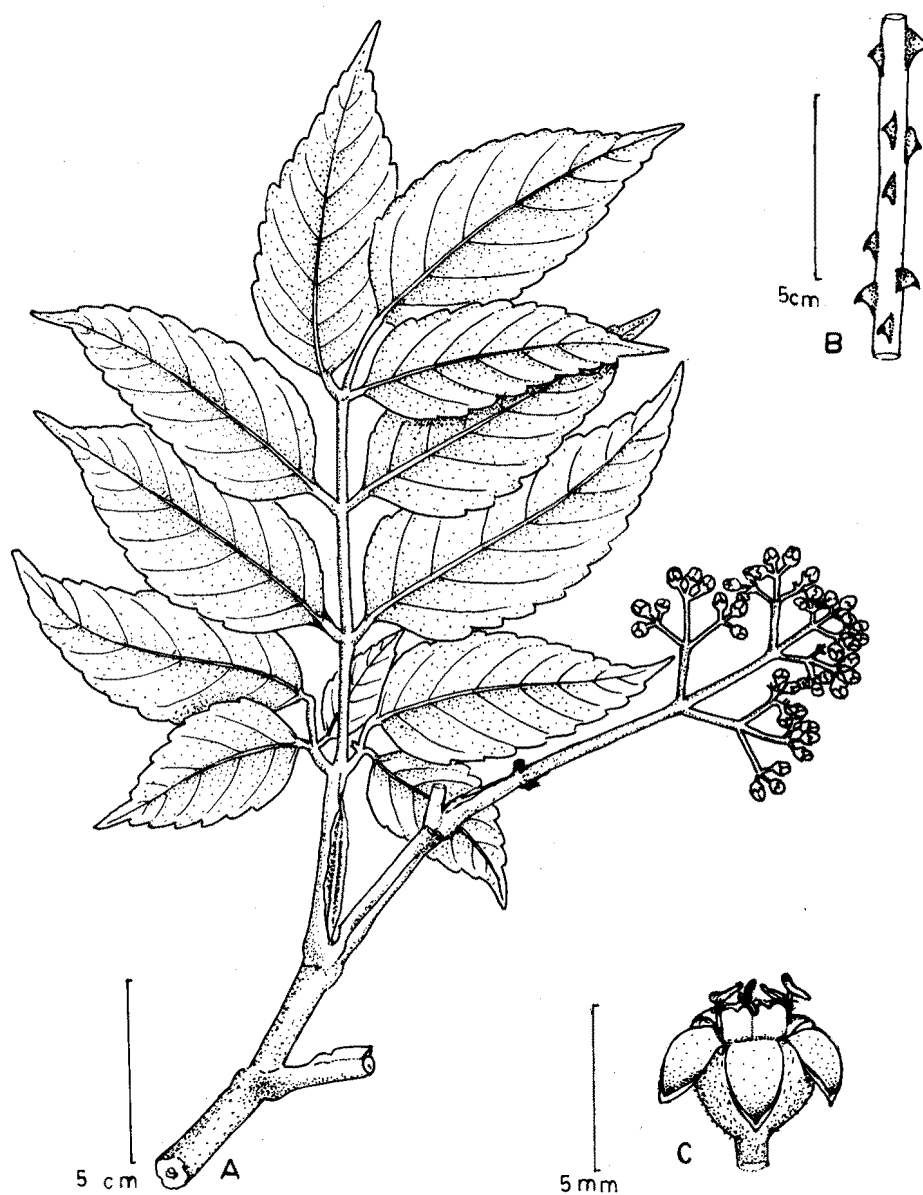


Fig. 1. *Leea adwivedica* Krishna Kumar: A. Flowering twig; B. A portion of the sprouting stem showing prickles; C. Single flower.

***Leea adwivedica*, a new species from Andaman**

Types: India, North Andaman Islands, Dumar Nullah, 23 Sep. 1990, *Krishna Kumar 0338* (*Holo* - CAL; *Iso* - Herbarium, Botany Department, Jawaharlal Nehru Rajkeeya Mahavidyalaya, Port Blair; North Andaman Islands, Sinduri Nullah, 18 Jun. 1998, *Krishna Kumar 0019A* (K), *0019 B & C* (*Para* - CAL, PBL respectively).

Arborescent plants, 6-10 m tall; bole lined with sharp prickles (without any specific pattern). Shoots also emanate from the base of the main trunk. Branches and branchlets unarmed except for the young sprouts which have deep red prickles. Leaves imparipinnate, leaflets 5-7; petiole 5-5.5 cm, petiolar stipules 4 x 0.2-0.4 cm, sparsely muricate especially on the dorsal surface, form a narrow wing, wings prominent in young petioles; rachis 21 cm long; leaflets ovate-oblong to elliptic, 5-15 x 3-6.5 cm, glabrous beneath, chartaceous, margin coarsely serrate, apex acute or acuminate, base cuneate, oblique, lateral nerves 10-12 pairs; petiolules glabrous, 0.5-0.6 cm long; leaf scar prominent. Inflorescence a multichasial cyme, pubescent; bracts broadly triangular, 0.1-0.2 x 0.1-0.2 cm. Flowers 5-merous, pale greenish white to pale yellow. Calyx pubescent; lobes 0.25 x 0.25 cm; petals 5, triangular, 0.4 x 0.2 cm, reflexed, pubescent. Staminal tube 0.2-0.3 cm long; stamen 0.1 cm long; filaments absent. Style produced into an undifferentiated stigma, 0.1 cm long, glabrous. Fruits 1-1.5 cm across, yellowish to golden brown. Seeds six per fruit, reddish, glabrous.

Leea adwivedica differs from *L. angulata* and *L. aculeata* in its arborescent habit. It is allied to *L. spinea* which is also arborescent, but differs in having unarmed branches and branchlets except when very young, glabrous petioles and lamina, pubescent calyx and corolla, and sessile anthers.

Etymology: The specific epithet is derived from the name of author's wife, Anju Dwivedi (A. Dwivedi).

Flowering and fruiting: June - September.

Distribution: Endemic to Andaman and Nicobar Islands. Occurring in South Andaman Islands (Havelock Island), Middle Andaman Islands (East coast and North of Betapur) and North Andaman Islands (inland forests along freshwater streams, Lamia Bay)

Vernacular names: *Bhagoda balli*, *Hasna phalli*.

Habitat: Niche-specific; found along the seasonal fresh water streams along the Lamia Bay on the East coast of the North Andaman Islands.

Notes: Further surveys are to be made to ascertain full range of the species distribution along the East coast and its population size in the Andaman Islands. Being niche-specific, clearing activities especially of thorny and weedy plants along the freshwater streams in North Andamans pose a potential threat to the species.

Krishna Kumar**Acknowledgements**

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