



Piper acutistigma C. DC. (Piperaceae): A new record for India

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***Piper acutistigmum* C. DC. (*Piperaceae*):
A new record for India**

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Abstract

Piper acutistigmum C. DC. of *Piperaceae* is reported for the first time from India.
Its detailed description, illustration and other relevant notes are provided.

INTRODUCTION

Malay Peninsula is the main center of diversity of *Piper* species in the Old World (Yuncker, 1958) and extend to Indian subcontinent also. Thus, some of the species are common in the Indo-Malaya region.

Piper acutistigmum C. DC. was originally reported and described from Myanmar by De Candolle (1923 & 1925). During the course of our systematic survey of the *Piper* species of Arunachal Pradesh and its adjoining areas, we could locate this species growing wild in the foot hills of Itanagar area in the Papum Pare district as well as in some other localities. This collection forms an interesting record, as it extends its distribution from Myanmar to Arunachal Pradesh of North East India. Our collection is further significant as it is the first record for India and rediscovery after a lapse of about 74 years. To facilitate easy identification of the species a detailed description and illustration are provided.

The species can be easily identified in the field, by its large climbing habit, hanging, lateral fertile branches, leaves with puberulence on the lower surface, pendulous, yellow flowering and fruiting spikes with large, loosely aggregated drupes become yellow and then red on ripening with pungent taste.

***Piper acutistigmum* C. DC., Candollea 1: 188. 1923 et *ibid.*, 2: 196. 1925. (Fig. 1).**

A stout woody, much branched climber, reaching a height of 20 m; branches dimorphic, glabrous. Stem of vegetative climbing branches produce adventitious roots mainly from the lower side of the node. The fertile lateral branches are pendulous, terete and the nodes are highly swollen without any adventitious root. Leaves of the vegetative branch are

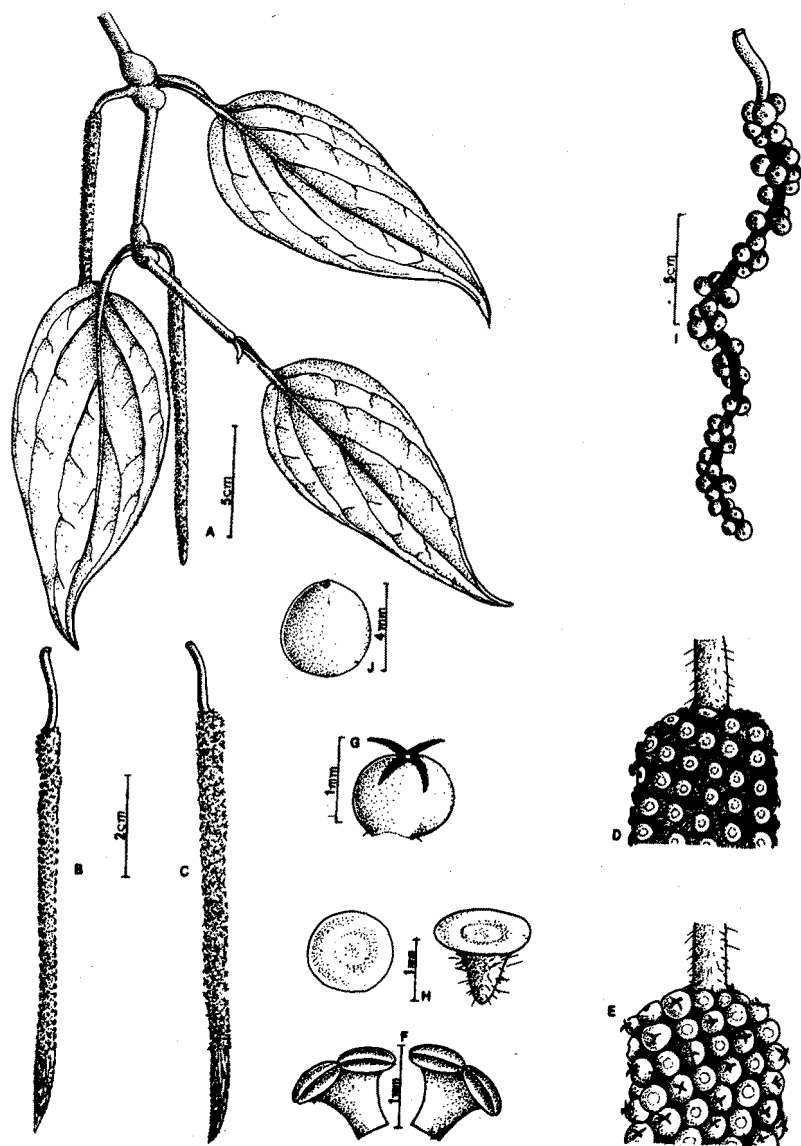
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Fig. 1. *Piper acutistigmum* C. DC.: A. Male flowering twig; B. Male spike; C. Female spike; D. Enlarged view of male spike - a portion; E. Enlarged view of female spike - a portion; F. Stamen; G. Pistil; H. Bract; I. Fruiting spike; J. Fruit.

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ovate, 9-12 x 5-7 cm, thinly coriaceous, base slightly cordate, tip acuminate; petiole long, 3-5 cm, with a shallow groove through out the length. Leaves of fertile branches are thinly coriaceous, ovate-lanceolate, 12-16 x 6-8 cm, base asymmetric, tip highly acuminate, petiole short, 1-2 cm. The petiole and undersurface of the leaves of both branches are minutely pubescent mainly on the veins. Veins 7, 4 arise from the base along the mid vein and 2 more arise alternately from 1-2 cm. higher up of the basal. Plant dioecious. Both the male and female flowering spikes slender, drooping, yellow, 8-14 cm long; puberulent peduncle 1-2 cm, rachis hairy. Bracts orbicular peltate, pubescent on the stalk. Flowers arranged compactly along with the bracts. Stamens two, 1 mm, anther erect, anther lobes 4; filament short and thick. Carpel one, 1 mm, globose; stigma 4 (or 3), sessile. Fruiting spike lengthening up to 20 cm. Drupe loosely aggregated, turn yellow to reddish on ripening, pungent in taste.

Flowering and fruiting: March - December

Distribution : India (Arunachal Pradesh) and Upper Myanmar.

Ecology: Widely distributed in the evergreen and semievergreen secondary forests at an elevation between 150-500 m. They prefer to grow on large trees. The male, female and sterile vines grow side by side and form a population.

Specimens examined: India, Arunachal Pradesh, Papum Pane Dist.: Banderdewa and Nirjuli forest, *Gajurel* 7; West Kameng Dist: Tipi and Sessa along road sides, *Gajurel* 81 (Herbarium of NERIST).

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