

NOTES ON *LITSEA BEEI* N. MOHANAN & E.S.S. KUMAR (LAURACEAE)

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Litsea beei N. Mohanan & E.S.S.Kumar collected from Agasthamala Hills, was published as a new species and was considered in the protologue as allied to Burmese element *L. myristicaefolia*. (Mohanani & Kumar, Nordic J. Bot. 23(5):611.2004). Taxonomic revision of the genus in India was undertaken by the present authors under Flora of India project. The critical and detailed taxonomic studies on the herbarium material revealed that *L. beei* is not related to *L. myristicaefolia* and in fact the two species belong to different sections of the genus. Arrangement of male umbellules is similar in *L. beei* (clearly provided in the protologue) as well as in *L. venulosa*. Moreover, the morpho-taxonomical characters of leaves, inflorescence and fruits in *L. beei* are falling within the circumscription of *L. venulosa*. In the present paper the former has been treated as a synonym of the latter.

Following is a brief description of the species, with correct nomenclature and distribution:

Litsea venulosa (Meisn.) Hook. f., Fl. Brit. India.5: 161. 1886; Gamble, Fl. Madras 1235. 1925 (reprint 2: 865. 1957); Rao, Flow. Pl. Travancore 345. 1914; Ahmedullah & M. P. Nayar, End. Pl. Ind. Reg. 1: 66. 1986; V. Chandras. in A. N. Henry, Kumari & Chithra, Fl. Tamil Nadu Analysis 2: 211. 1987; M. Mohanan & A. N. Henry, Fl. Thiruvananthapuram 396. 1994. *Tetranthera venulosa* Meisn. in DC., Prod. 15(1): 187.1864. Type: Peninsular India Wight s.n. (K photo!). *L. beei* N. Mohanan & E.S.S.Kumar, Nordic J. Botany 23 (5): 611. 2004. **syn. nov.** Type: India, Kerala, Thiruvananthapuram district, Agasthamala Hills, Attayar, 700 m, 27.6.1994, Mohanan TBGRI 12439 (holotype TBGT, photo!)
(Plate 1)

Straggling shrubs, 5 - 6 m tall, evergreen, winter buds absent. Branchlets cylindric, woody, glabrous, brown. Leaves 8 - 13 x 2.5 - 5 cm, alternate, elliptic-oblong, abruptly acuminate at apex, entire along margin, cuneate at base, thinly chartaceous, dull green, glabrous, primary vein prominent, secondary veins obscure above; purplish green beneath, glabrous, primary and secondary veins prominent, secondary veins 6 - 10 pairs, weak brochidodromous, secondary vein spacing slightly decreasing towards base, secondary vein angle of origin more or less uniform, inter-secondary veins sometimes present, tertiary veins alternate percurrent, tertiary vein course sinuous; petiole slender, 6 - 10 mm long, glabrous, dark brown. Inflorescence of umbellules, 8 - 10 x 6 - 8 mm, male umbellules solitary, axillary, 4 - 5 flowered, female umbellules in racemes, 1.8 - 3.2 cm long, pedunculate, bracteate; peduncles 4 - 6 mm long, slender, pale green, glabrous; bracts 4, outer two 4 - 5 x 3.5 - 5 mm, concave, chartaceous, glabrous; inner two 3 - 5 x 3 - 5 mm, orbicular, membranous, glabrous; flowers 4 - 6 x 3 - 5 mm, yellow green; pedicel 0.5 - 0.8 mm long, puberulous; perianth lobes 6, c. 1.5 mm long, oblong, membranous, gland-dotted, green, glabrous; male flowers: stamens 12, in 4 rows, outer 2 rows 2 - 2.5 mm long, exerted, inner 2 rows c. 1.5 mm long, glandular; filaments glabrous; anther c. 1 mm long, 4 celled, introrse; glands c. 1 mm long, 2 each at base of inner rows of stamens, 2 lobed, sessile; pistillode c. 1 mm long, glabrous, rudimentary; female flowers: staminodes 12, in 4 rows, outer 2 rows 2 - 2.5 mm long, exerted, inner 2 rows 1.5 - 2 mm long, filaments hairy; glands c. 1 mm long, 2 each at base of inner rows of staminodes, stalked, 2 lobed; pistil 2.5 - 3 mm long, style 1 - 2 mm long, glabrous, stigma discoid, ovary c. 1 mm long, ovoid, glabrous; Berries 6 - 10 mm in diameter, globose, green when young, purple at maturity, glabrous, seated on persistent perianth, plate-like, 4 mm in diameter.

Fl.: June to December; *Fr.*: July to December.

Habitat: The species grows in evergreen and semi-evergreen forests from 700 m to 1400 m above the sea level in south Western Ghats.

Distribution: INDIA: Kerala, Tamil Nadu. Endemic.



Plate 1. A. Type of *Litsea beei* B. Type of *Tetranthera venulosa*

Specimens Examined: s.loc., R. A. Beddome s.n., acc. no. 45008, (MH); Kerala, Idukki district, Laxmi estate, 1300 m, 15-12-1982, C. N. Mohanan 76117, buds (MH); Puliyanmala, 1300 m, 15-12-1982, C. N. Mohanan 76124, buds (MH); Cardamom Hills, Mankulur below Munnar, 22-6-1976, s.l., s.n., 226, acc. no. 128380, buds (MH); Tamil Nadu, Coimbatore district, Anamallays, s. date, s. coll., acc. no. 44700, buds (MH); Lower Nirar to Italiar forest, 950 m, 6-9-1983, K. Ramamurty 78449, fls (MH); Italiyar River Forest, 950 m, 8-9-1983, K. Ramamurty & R. Chandrabose 77507, buds (MH); Teni district, High Wavy Mountains, 4600 ft, 8-9-1925, K. C. Jacob 77072, buds (MH); Tirunelveli district, Courtallam Hills, 3000 ft, s.date, s.l., s.n., acc. no. 47874, female fls, (MH); Tinnevely Hills, 1854, R. A. Beddome s.n., acc. no. 44892, (MH); Tinnevely Hills, 1868, R. A. Beddome s.n., acc. no. 44698, (MH); Near Kannikatty, 800 m, 15-7-1964, Henry & Chandrabose 19876, fls (MH); Upper Inchikuzhi, Kannikatti, 750 m, 16-7-1964, A. N. Henry & M. Chandrabose 19911, male fls, (MH); Valayar Estate to Servalaru, 1000 m, 13-7-1976, P. Bhargavan 47470 buds (CAL, MH); Kannikatty R. F., 900 m, 18-7-1989, R. Gopalan 90590, male fls (MH); On way to Inchikuzhi from Kannikatti, 700 m, 24-10-1990, R. Gopalan 93328, frts (MH); Kanyakumari district, Kilaviarumalai, Balamore, 480 m, 28-7-1977, A. N. Henry 49428, male fls (MH). Agasthamala, 27.06.1994, Rajkumar 11760 (TBGT).

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