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WILD ASTERACEOUS SPECIES OF INDIAN BOTANIC GARDEN

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ABSTRACT

The paper deals with the wild Asteraceous species of Indian Botanic Garden, Howrah in West Bengal. A total number of 16 wild species growing in this garden have been recorded. All are herbaceous. Many species flower throughout the year. The leaves of *Mikania macrantha* Kunth and *Ageratum conyzoides* L. are crushed and applied on wounds.

INTRODUCTION

Situated on the west bank of river Ganga (Hooghly) in Howrah district of West Bengal, the Indian Botanic Garden covers an area of about 273 acres and is divided into 25 divisions, each specified for growing different types of plants. There are 24 lakes in the garden. The roads inside the garden, avenues and lakes are named after famous botanists and other technical staff of the garden. Indian Botanic Garden is, the living repository of more than 12,000 trees, shrubs and woody climbers, representing over 1400 species together with a large number of wild and cultivated herbs. Unlike other earlier established gardens in India, which were later on, turned into either horticultural or fruit gardens, this garden preserves one of the best collections of native and exotic plants together with a large number of wild species. After independence, two lists dealing with the woody plants were published. The district flora too deals with the plants of other localities with little mention of this garden. To fulfill this gap and to bring out a comprehensive and detailed flora, a project has been initiated for preparing the Flora of Indian Botanic Garden. The present paper deals with the wild Asteraceous species existing in IBG. A preliminary study revealed a total of 16 wild herbaceous species of Asteraceae growing in this garden have been recorded. Many species flower throughout the year. *Mikania micrantha* Kunth, twining on bushes, trees, walls, fencing, etc. is almost naturalized and gregarious at several places, especially along river bank and in division number 9. Other species are found chiefly in division number 3, along Wallich Avenue, division number 9, 11, 24, etc. In present enumeration correct binomial, with author's name, basionym if any, local name if any, habit, flower colour, flowering and fruiting period, used if any have been provided.

ENUMERATION

1. **Ageratum conyzoides** L. "Uchunti" (Bengali)
Annual or perennial herbs, up to 60 cm high. Heads blue or white.
Fl. & Fr. : Throughout the year, mainly during rainy season.
Uses : Leaf juice applied on wounds.

2. **Blumea lacera** (Burm.f.) DC. (*Conyza lacera* Burm.f)
Erect, densely hairy, glandular, aromatic herbs, up to 1 m high. Heads yellow.
Fl. & Fr. : Throughout the year, chiefly during Mar.-June.
Uses : It yields an essential oil and is used medicinally as diuretic, anthelmintic, stimulant and febrifuge.

3. **B. laciniata** (Roxb.) DC. (*Conyza laciniata* Roxb).
Erect, aromatic herbs, up to 1.8 (-2.3) m high. Heads yellow.
Fl. & Fr. : Throughout the year, mainly during Feb.-Apr.

4. **B. oxyodonta** DC.
Small procumbent herbs, up to 40 cm high. Heads yellow.
Fl. & Fr. : Oct. May.

5. **Elephantopus scaber** L. "Gobhi" (Hindi)
Erect, perennial herbs, up to 60 cm high. Heads blue.
Fl. & Fr. : Throughout the year, chiefly during rainy season.

6. **Eclipta prostrata** (L.) L. *Verbesina prostrata* L. "Bhringraj" (Hindi)
Erect, prostrate or procumbent annual or perennial herbs, 10-50 cm high. Heads white.
Fl. & Fr. : Throughout the year, chiefly during rainy season.

7. **Erigeron sublyratus** DC.
Erect or decumbent annual herbs, 14-60 cm high. Heads yellow, pink or purplish.
Fl. & Fr. : Apr. July.

8. **Gnaphalium polycaulon** Pers.
Erect-decumbent, slender herbs, up to 50 cm high. Heads yellowish.
Fl. & Fr. : Throughout the year, chiefly during Feb. June.

9. **Launaea asplenifolia** (Willd.) Hook.f. (*Prenanthes asplenifolia* Willd.) "Tikchana" (Bengali).
Perennial herbs with yellow latex, 5-30 cm high. Heads yellow.
Fl. & Fr. : Mar. - Oct.

10. **Mikania micrantha** Kunth.
Slender twiner. Heads whitish.
Fl. & Fr. : June Dec.
Uses : The leaves are used to cure wounds.

11. **Sonchus asper** (L.) Hill. (*S. oleraceus* L. var. *asper* L.) "Didhi" (Hindi
Erect annual herbs, up to 70 cm high. Heads yellow.
Fl. & Fr. : Apr. Sept.

12. **S. brachyotus** DC.
Perennial rhizomatous herbs, up to 2 m high. Heads yellow.
Fl. & Fr. : Mar. Nov.

13. **Tridax procumbens** L.
Erect herbs, up to 20 cm high. Heads yellow.
Fl. & Fr. : Jan. Mar.

14. **Vernonia cinerea** (L.) Less (*Conyza cinerea* L.)
Much branched herbs, up to 60 cm high. Heads pinkish.
Fl. & Fr. : Most part of the year, chiefly during summer.

15. **Wedelia chinensis** (Osbeck) Merr. (*Solidago chinensis* Osbeck)
Procumbent or ascending herbs. Heads yellow.
Fl. & Fr. : Throughout the year.

16. **Xanthium strumarium** L.
Stout herbs or undershrubs. Heads greenish
Fl. & Fr. : Mar.- July

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