PEDALIUM MUREX L. (PEDALIACEAE) – A NEW REPORT FROM MIDNAPORE TO THE STATE OF WEST BENGAL

DEBABRATA DAS
Botanical Survey of India, Howrah 711 103

During the identification of the material collected from Kansaihalt (Das, CBL.-563, 564, 569; dated 23.06.2000) Midnapore District, West Bengal, an interesting species of Pedaliaceae was noticed. After critical study of literature and herbarium (CAL) it has now been confirmed as *Pedalium murex* Royen ex L. (Pedaliaceae).

From the herbarium specimens, it is found that there is not a single collection housed in this herbarium from the aforesaid district of West Bengal State. From its distributional pattern it is interesting to say that this species is extending its limitation to Eastern part of India through West Bengal along coastal path. A short description with illustration has been provided for easy identification and further study. Further work on seed germination, ecological studies, anatomical and pharmacognostic importance are in progress. It is a good sand binder. A perusal of literature revealed that it has got good medicinal properties (Watt, 1832, 1889-1893; Kirtikar and Basu, 1993).

Pedalium murex Royen ex L. Syst. ed. 10 : 1123. 1759; Roxb. Fl. Indica 3 : 114. 1832; Wight Ic. t. 1615. 1841; Dalz. & Gibs. Bomb. Fl. 62. 1861; Hook. f. Fl. Brit. India 4 : 386. 1882; Haines, Bot. Bihar & Orissa 2 : 692. 1922 (Plate 1).

Vernacular Names : Beng.-Baraghokru; Guj.-Motto-gokharu, kadvaghokru; Hindi-Bara-gokhru, kadvagokhru; Mar.-Hatticharatte, Mothe-gokharu; Pan.-Gokru-Kalan; Tam.-Peru-nerunji, Ananerinnil, Anainerinji, Oriya-Gokara, Gokshura; Tel.-Enugu-Palleru, Pedda-palleru.

A fleshy diffuse herb, c. 8-25 cm high with ascending branches. Leaves repand-dentate, alternate, 3.2 5.2 × 1 - 2.2 cm, coriaceous, glabrous, petiolate, spathulate, dentate, green to crimson-yellow. Flowers axillary, pedicillate, with 2 curious botton-shaped glands at insertion, crimson to yellow, 2.2 3.2 cm long. Calyx deeply 5-lobed. Corolla yellow to crimson - yellow, tubular; lobes round; stamens 4, didynamous, included, anther-cells ovate, parallel, separate, pendulous.

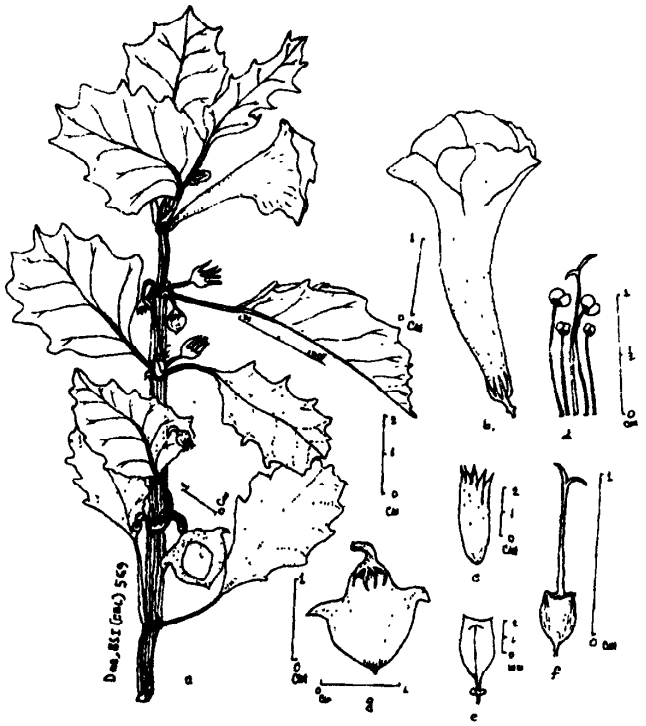


Fig.1 (a-g) : *Pedalium murex* L.
a. Habit; b. Flower; c. Calyx,; d. Stamens;
e. Ovary; f. Gynoecium; g. Fruit.

Fl. & Fr. :June-Dec.

Distribution This is a monotypic species in India. India Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Delhi, Rajasthan, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Orissa, Diu island; Tropical Africa, Sri Lanka, Mexico.

Uses The mucilagenous infusion is incredited with demulcent, diuretic and tonic properties and is used against the diseases of the Urino-genital system, such as gonorrhoea, dysuria etc. It is said to dissolve calculi. The leaves are applied to ulcers and a decoction of the roots is said to be antibilious. In market and local fairs ripen fruits are marketed for Ayurvedic value.

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