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GENUS *DRACAENA* VANDELLI EX L. IN ANDAMAN AND NICOBAR ISLANDS

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A B S T R A C T

Dracaena Vandelli ex L. is represented in Andaman and Nicobar Islands by eight species. *Dracaena nutans* reported earlier from Andaman is now correctly identified as *Dracaena pendula* which has distribution in adjoining Malay Peninsula and is a new record for Indian flora. *Dracaena brachyphylla* is an endemic to India confining its distribution to these Islands. A taxonomic account of eight species of *Dracaena* is presented with key, brief citation, description, distribution, phenology and exsiccata is.

Dracaena Vandelli ex L. is represented by *ca* 40 species distributed in Africa, Asia and Australia (Airy Shaw, 1973). J.D. Hooker (1892) described fifteen (15) species and three (3) varieties of this genus from India, Myanmar, Bangladesh and Malay peninsula of which eight species are known to occur in India. Parkinson (1923) recorded two species of *Dracaena* from Andaman Islands, while Vasudeva Rao (1986) in his preliminary list of angiosperms enumerated eight species from Andaman & Nicobar Islands. Later, Karthikeyan *et al.* (1989) enumerated nine (9) species and two (2) varieties of *Dracaena* from India, of which seven species are known from Andaman & Nicobar Islands.

The scrutiny of the herbarium specimens and study of the literature reveals that the species designated as *D. nutans* reported by Rao (1986) and Karthikeyan (1989) from Andaman Islands is actually *D. pendula* which is known to occur in Malay Peninsula. *D. pendula* differs from *D. nutans* in having broad-oblanceolate leaves, large panicles and large flowers. Thus *D. nutans* does not occur in India and the report of *D. pendula* is an addition to the genus *Dracaena* for Indian flora.

KEY TO THE SPECIES

1a. Flowers in panicles :

2a. Leaves sessile.

3a. Trees *ca* 8 m tall ; panicles *ca* 50 cm long :

4a. Berry 1.5 cm broad ... *D. angustifolia*

4b. Berry 3-4 cm broad ... *D. linearifolia*

3b. Shrubs *ca* 4 m tall ; panicles 20-25 cm long ... *D. brachyphylla*

2b. Leaves petiolate :

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5a. Shrubs up to 50 cm tall ; bracteoles minute ; perianth cleft nearly at the base. ... *D. helferiana*

5b. Shrubs 3-5 m tall ; brtacteoles large ; perianth cleft at 2/3 of the length from the base :

6a. Leaves broad, oblanceolate, 30 cm long ; petioles small, winged ; panicles *ca* 35 cm long ... *D. pendula*

6b. Leaves elliptic-oblong or linear lanceolate ; petiole long, attenuate ; panicles 10-25 cm long ... *D. elliptica*

1b. Flowers in simple terminal racemes :

7a. Shrubs 3-4.5 m tall ; leaves 30 cm or more long ; racemes 8-20 cm long ; corolla twisted ... *D. spicata*

7b. Shrubs up to 60 cm tall ; leaves up to 15 cm long ; racemes *ca* 5 cm long ; corolla not twisted ... *D. pachyphylla*

Dracaena angustifolia Roxb., Fl. Ind. 2 : 155. 1832 : Hook. f., Fl. Brit. Ind. 6 : 327. 1892 ; Parkinson, For. Fl. Andaman Islands 261. 1923 ; Vasudeva Rao in J. Econ. Tax. Bot. 8(1) : 152. 1986.

Large shrubs *ca* 8 m tall ; 3-10 cm in diam., glabrous, smooth. Leaves many, 30-50× 3-4 cm, linear, sessile with broad sheathing base. Flowers numerous in terminal panicles, greenish white ; bracts 3-5 mm long ; pedicels *ca* 6 mm long. Perianth campanulate, 6 cleft, *ca* 2.5 cm long. Stamens 6, filaments white. Berry 1.5 cm in diam., orange red.

Fl. & Fr. : March-August.

Ecol. : Commonly growing on sandy soil in coastal and inland forests.

Distrib. : India : N.E. India, E. Himalaya, Andaman & Nicobar Islands ; Myanmar, Malay Peninsula and Australia.

Specimens examined : ANDAMAN & NICOBAR ISLANDS : Car Nicobar, Passa, 2.3.1974, *N. G. Nair* 9576 (PBL) ; South Andaman, Wandoor, 3.7.1974, *N. P. Balakrishnan* 1670 (PBL) ; Great Nicobar, N. S. Road, 17.8.1975, *N. P. Balakrishnan* 2941 (PBL) ; Little Andaman, Dugong Creek, 31.8.1976, *N. P. Balakrishnan* 4302 (PBL) ; North Nicobar, Katchal, 14.2.1977, *P. Chakraborty* 5208 (PBL) ; Middle Andaman, Rangat, 4.11.1977, *N. Bhargava* 6341 (PBL) ; Great Nicobar, N. S. Road, 29.4.1981, *R. P. Dwivedi* 8091 (PBL).

Dracaena brachyphylla Kurz in Jour. Asiat. Soc. Bengal 42. 2 : 249. 1873 & For. Fl. Brit. Burma 2 : 544, 1877 ; Hook. f., Fl. Brit. India 6 : 328. 1892 ; Vasudeva Rao in J. Econ. Tax. Bot. 8(1) : 152. 1986.

Branched glabrous shrubs, *ca* 4 m tall. Leaves 15-30 × 1.5 cm, linear, sessile, with stem clasping leafy petiole like base, acuminate at apex. Inflorescence in panicle ; flowers white, 1.6 cm long ; pedicels 5-7.5 cm long ; bracts *ca* 1.25 cm long ; linear, lanceolate ; bracteoles ovate, membranous with scarious margins. Perianth 6 cleft. Stamens 6, filaments white. Berry *ca* 2 cm in diam., reddish brown 3-lobed.

Fl. & Fr. : April-Oct.

Ecol. : Commonly growing on sandy loam in littoral forests in shady places.

Distrib. : India : Andaman and Nicobar Islands (Endemic).

Specimens examined : ANDAMAN & NICOBAR ISLANDS : South Andaman, Hobdaypur, Hill Jungle, 13.10.1892, *G. King* 1618 (PBL) ; Great Nicobar, Galathea towards Pygmalion Point, 18.7.1976, *N. P. Balakrishnan* 3683 (PBL) ; Alexandra River Bank, 21.9.1980, *D. K. Hore* 7956 (PBL).

Dracaena elliptica Thunb., Diss. Bot. Bracaen. 6. 1808 ; Hook. f., Fl. Brit. India 6 : 330. 1892 ; Vasudeva Rao in J. Econ. Tax. Bot. 8(1) : 152. 1986.

Shrubs up to 3m high. Leaves 35 x 3 cm, broad, oblong-lanceolate, acuminate, narrowed to the base, glossy; petiole short, winged. Panicles *ca* 35 cm long, branches few, slender, *ca* 20 cm long; flowers 1.8-2.5 cm long, in distinct tuft of 2 or 3 nos., white; pedicels 8 mm long; bracts acuminate, scarious 2 mm long; perianath 6-cleft. Stamens 6. Berry 1.5 cm in diam., 3-lobed.

Fl. & Fr. : Nov.-March.

Ecol. : Rare in inland forests on sandy loam soil.

Distrib. : India : Andaman Islands; Malay Peninsula.

Notes : *Dracaena pendula* Ridl., is a new record for India from Andaman Islands.

Specimens examined: ANDAMAN & NICOBAR ISLANDS : South Andaman, Rangachang forests, 17.2.1973, *N. P. Balakrishnan* 24 (PBL); Myomyo Inland forests, 20.10.1973, *N. P. Balakrishnan* 530 (PBL); Dhanikhari, 6.2.1974, *N. G. Nair* 870 (PBL); North Andaman, Lamia Bay, Ramnagar, 29.3.1977, *N.P. Balakrishnan* 5350 (PBL).

Dracaena spicata Roxb. Fl. Ind. 2 : 157. 1832; Hook. f., Fl., Brit. Ind. 6 : 328. 1892; Parkinson, For. Fl. Andaman 261. 1923; Vasudeva Rao in J. Econ. Tax. Bot. 8(1) : 152. 1986.

Large shrub up to 4.5 m long; stem 2.5-3.75 cm broad. Leaves 30-45 x 3-5 cm, elliptic-lanceolate or broadly lanceolate, crowded at end of the branches, acuminate at apex, gradually tapering at the base into a broad leafy half stem clasping petiole *ca* 3.75 cm long. Inflorescence 8-20 cm long in terminal racemes; flowers green yellow; pedicels 2-8 mm long, articulate at apex; perianth 8-10 mm long, pale yellow, 6-cleft. Stamens 6, filaments white. Berries *ca* 1.5 cm in diam., orange 3 lobed.

Fl. & Fr. : April- Sept.

Ecol. : Rare in the islands along the coasts.

Distrib. : India : N. E. India, Andaman Islands Myanmar, Bangladesh.

Specimens examined: ANDAMAN & NICOBAR ISLANDS : South Andaman, 9.5.1973, *N.P. Balakrishnan* 112 (PBL).

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