

bracts ovate to rounded or acute, deciduous, 0.75-1.5 cm long; calyx fleshy, glabrous outside with band of scattered collectors slightly above the base inside, deciduous, 0.75-1.5 cm long, 0.8-1.5 cm in diameter; sepal suborbicular to semicircular, 4-7.5 mm in diameter; corolla creamy, tube 1-2 cm long, prominently twisted, angularly swollen below the tip of the tube with a faucal annulus inside; petal slightly twisted, suborbicular to orbicular, when separated from tube obovate, 1.75-2.5 cm in diameter; stamens included, inserted just below the throat of corolla, style equalling the length of corolla tube, stellately thickened at apex, disk annular, 5-lobed; fruit of two partly united carpels, mature carpel slightly longer than wide and almost as thick as wide, 4-6 cm in diameter, dark green with grey warts; seeds arillate, dark brown, papillose all over.

KERALA. Trivandrum : T. S. Nayar 2371 (TBGT, K).

Note : Of about 120 representative specimens mentioned world wide in the revisionary work of the genus *Voacanga*, Dr. Leeuwenberg (*l.c.*) has included two specimens collected by one Erlanson and deposited in MICH and NY with collection no 5129 from the same locality in Kerala. Dr. Leeuwenberg (*l.c.*) doubted whether this was a garden

escape. Authorities of state owned Botanic Garden connected with the Zoo at Trivandrum has no record of its introduction in their garden. The species has naturalised establishing well at many places in Trivandrum and is gregariously encroaching waste places and compounds. Stumps of some of them have attained the girth diameter of even 20 cm or more. As this species has gone locally under the name *Pagiantha dichotoma* (Roxb.) Markgr. the identity of this plant so far was not doubted.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author is thankful to Mr. B. V. Shetty, Indian Liaison Officer at Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew for identifying the genus and sending a photocopy of Dr. Leeuwenberg's paper on *Voacanga* and to Dr. Leeuwenberg, Department of Plant Taxonomy, Agricultural University, Wageningen. The Netherlands for identifying the species. The Director, Tropical Botanic Garden and Research Institute extended necessary facilities.

T. S. NAYAR

Tropical Botanic Garden and Research Institute
Trivandrum

ON THE FOLKLORE OF *ADANSONIA DIGITATA* L. FROM RAJASTHAN

Adansonia digitata L. commonly known as *Gorakhimli* or *Karsaan aamli* is a native of tropical Africa and introduced in India by Arab traders. It was first recorded in Rajasthan from Ajmer—Mangaliawas (Shetty & Singh 1987). Later on it was also reported from Pratapgarh of district Chittorgarh (South Rajasthan). It is being planted in

Banswara town in gardens and on avenues as a popular avenue tree (Singh, 1983). During recent plant explorations of Jhalawar district (S. E. Rajasthan) the author located it from 2 places. The specimens collected were identified and deposited in Herbarium, Botany Department, University of Rajasthan (RUBL).

Jhalawar district, one of 3 districts of Kota division lies in South eastern part of Rajasthan, adjacent to the northern edge of the Deccan plateau. The area has an annual rainfall of 996 mm and the temperature fluctuates between 3.5°C (during winter season) to 47.5°C (during summer). The soil varies from sandy to clayey loam with a pH values ranging from 5.3-8.3. However black cotton soil is also found at certain places.

Although the flora of the region has been studied by Majumdar (1971, 1976, & 1980), Maheshwari and Singh (1976), Singh and Pandey (1979, and 1984), Shringi (1986), and Gandhi (1989), details on the economic and religious importance of this species have not been mentioned.

ENUMERATION

Adansonia digitata L. (Bombacaceae) *Karsa-naamli* or *Mansapooran* : A large deciduous tree with remarkably large and broad bottle-shaped trunk. Leaves compound digitate, leaflets wide obovate, tip acute, surface hairy. Flowers large, pendent white, with strong stinking smell, open in night and fall by morning. Fruits large woody and oblong with brown velvet hairy outer surface.

Spec. Loc. Cit. : Dag RUBL 22925 (NKS 1703). Near Chomahala RUBL 22928 (NKS 1709).

Fl. & Fr. : May-September.

ETHNOBOTANICAL IMPORTANCE

Food : Dried pulp is sour and acidic hence eaten raw or with vegetables by the tribals and rural people.

Sacred belief : Rural as well as tribal societies of the area firmly believe about its folklore and they popularly call it "*Mansapooran*" (one who fulfills the aspirations). They tie a small stone with red coloured sacred tag (Lachha), which is tagged to the tree branches after praying for their ex-

pectations to be fulfilled. The author has observed thousands of such stones tied to the tree trunks. It was also informed that devotees put a specific mark on the stone while fixing it, and untie after their *Bolari* is fulfilled. Further studies revealed the same folk belief attached to the tree in Ajmer district also where it is known as "*Kalpriksha*" but the pattern is different. In the areas surveyed the tree was found singly contrary to the belief that this tree never grows singly.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I am highly thankful to my teacher Dr. B. Tiagi retired Professor of Botany, University of Rajasthan, Jaipur for immense help and encouragement.

N. K. SHARMA

Department of Botany, Govt. College, Jhalawar

REFERENCES

- GANDHI T. *Rajasthan Vegetation Index* pp. 326, New Delhi, 1989.
- MAHESHWARI, J. K. AND V. SINGH. Supplement to the Synoptic flora of Kota Division. *Bull. Bot. Surv. India* 18: 155-160. 1976.
- MAJUMDAR, R. B. Synoptic flora of Kota division (S.E. Rajasthan) I. *Ibid.* 13: 105-146. 1971.
- Synoptic flora of Kota division (S.E. Rajasthan) II. *Ibid.* 18: 49-79. 1976.
- Synoptic flora of Kota division (S.E. Rajasthan) III. *Ibid.* 22: 24-44. 1980.
- SHETTY, B. V. AND V. SINGH. Flora of Rajasthan. Vol. I. pp. 137. Howrah.
- SINGH, V. Flora of Banswara, Rajasthan. pp. 415. Howrah.
- AND R. P. PANDEY. Supplement to the synoptic flora of Kota Division II. *Bull. Bot. Surv. India* 21: 91-96. 1979.
- AND — Supplement to the Synoptic flora of Kota Division (S.E. Rajasthan) III. *Ibid.* 25: 57-61. 1984.
- SHRINGI, O. P. Flora of Jhalawar district (S.E. Rajasthan). Ph.D. thesis, University of Rajasthan, Jaipur, 1986.