DISTRIBUTIONAL NOTES ON SOME GRASSES FROM THE BAY ISLANDS

Six grasses are recorded here for the first time from Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

A critical study on the identity and distribution of the Grasses of Andaman & Nicobar Islands revealed that the following six species of Poaceae have not been reported from here by the earlier workers like Kurz (1876), Parkinson (1923), Thothathri (1962), Balakrishnan (1977) or Rao (1986). Hence a brief note is provided here to facilitate further collection and easy identification of these taxa.

Brachiaria miliiformis (J. Presl ex C. Presl) A. Chase in Contrib. U.S. Nat. Herb. 22 : 35. 1920. *Panicum miliiforme* J. Presl ex C. Presl. Rel. Haenk. 1 : 300. 1830. *P. distachyon* sensu Hook. f. Fl. Brit. Ind. 7 : 37. 1896, non Linn. 1771.

A creeping annual, frequent along the roadsides and wastelands. This species is nearer to and often confused with *B. distachya,* but can be distinguished by the larger spikelets, longer leaves and epaleate lower florets.

MIDDLE ANDAMANS : Austin II, 3.2.1959, *K. Thothathri* 9175 (PBL).

Digitaria violascens Link, Hort. Berol. 1 : 229. 1827. *Paspalum longiflorum* auct. non Retz. 1786; Hook. f. Fl. Brit. Ind. 7 : 17. 1896.

An annual erect or geniculate grass grows along the fringes of forest. It is closely allied to *D. longiflora,* but differs by the erect habit, more number of racemes and dark-coloured grains.

SOUTH ANDAMANS : Brooksabad, 7.11.1973, *N. P. Balakrishnan* 589 (PBL).

Echinochloa glabrescens Munro ex Hook. f., Fl. Brit. Ind. 7 : 31. 1896.

A perennial erect grass often grows in fallow fields. This species is very near to *E. stagnina,* but differs by having indurated, shining lower lemma.

NORTH ANDAMANS : Keralapuram, 5.12. 1976, *N. P. Balakrishnan* & *N. G. Nair* 4974 (PBL).

Eulalia trispicata (Schult.) Henr. in Blumea 3 : 453. 1940. *Andropogon trispicatus* Schult. Syst. Veg. 2. Mant. 452. 1824. *Pollinia argentea* Trin. in Bull. Acad. Sci. Petersb. 1 : 71. 1836; Hook. f. Fl. Brit. Ind. 7 : 111. 1896.

A perennial species frequent in grass heaths. It can be easily distinguished from the other species of the genus by its smaller, brownish spikelets and glabrous basal sheaths.

NORTH NICOBAR : Arong, Car Nicobar, 29.9.1976, *N. G. Nair* 4555 (PBL).

Ischaemum thomsonianum Stapf ex C.E.C. Fischer in Gamble, Fl. Pres. Madr. 1722. 1934. *I. murinum* auct. non Forst. 1786; Hook. f. Fl. Brit. India 7 : 135. 1896.

An annual creeping grass, rare along the fringes of forests. It may often confuse with *I. zeylanicolum,* but can be distinguished by the sessile lower leaves.

NORTH ANDAMANS : Diglipur, 5.12.1976, *N. P. Balakrishnan* & *N. G. Nair* 4953 (PBL).

Sorghum halepense (Linn.) Pers. Syn. Pl. 1 : 101. 1805. *Holcus halepensis* Linn. Sp. pl. 2 : 1047. 1753. *Andropogon halepensis* (Linn.) Brot. Fl. Lusit. I. 89. 1804; Hook. f. Fl. Brit. Ind. 7 : 182. 1896.

A tall perennial species frequently grows along the fringes of forests or in open grass heaths. This introduced 'Johnson Grass' is now naturalised all over India.

NORTH NICOBAR : Car Nicobar, 23.9.1976, *N. G. Nair* 4489 ; Pygmalion Point, 25.6.1981, *D. K. Hore* 8841 (PBL).

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LUERSSENIA KUHN—A NEW GENERIC FERN RECORD FROM THE NICOBAR ISLANDS, INDIA

Luerssenia Kuhn—a monotypic genus earlier known from Sumatra only is reported as new generic fern record from the Nicobar Islands of India for the first time. *L. kehdingiana* Kuhn is described in detail with illustrations. It is one of the rare species of fern.

The monotypic genus *Luerssenia* Kuhn is represented by *L. kehdingiana* Kuhn belonging to the family Aspidiaceae (cf. Copeland, 1947 ; Pichi-sermilli, 1977). The species was known so far only from Sumatra. During the course of incorporation of duplicate herbarium specimens received from Port Blair Herbarium (PBL), the authors came across a peculiar specimen obviously akin to and tentatively identified as *Tectaria singaporensis* Ching but on the scrutiny of literature, the present specimen can be easily segregated by erect rhizome, subdimorphic fronds i.e. fertile frond with much contracted lamina and longer stalk, sori elongated against rhizome creeping, fronds not sub-dimorphic i.e. fertile frond lamina slightly contracted, not on longer stipe and sori globular in *T. singapo riana* Ching. In view of confirmation of the specimen, a request was made to obtain the authentic sheet from Herb. Leiden. Since the type housed in Herb, Berlin (B) was later destroyed, we received a herbarium sheet determined by R. E. Holttum and verified by Jonc hecre and van Steenis as *Luerssenia kehdingiana* Kuhn with the remark on covering letter "as only one specimen present" in the Herbarium and as "Second collection" on the herbarium label. This specimen exactly matches with the Nicobar specimen in all respects. Its occurrence in Nicobar Islands establishes its new distributional record for the region. A perusal of literature reveals that the genus *Luerssenia* Kuhn is extremely rare in its occurrence in Sumatra, since Copeland (1947) remarked that 'I have never seen this fern nor any record of any except the original collection'

We received the only collection available in Leiden collected in the year 1937. Recently it has been collected from the Nicobar Islands from only one site, any habitat disturbance may cause its total disappearance. Hence, *ex situ* conservation is recommended,