study of illustrations, *S. sinensis* (Pers.) Ames and *H. lanceum* (Thumb. ex. Sw.) J. Vuyk. are two very distinct species and can not be treated as conspecific.

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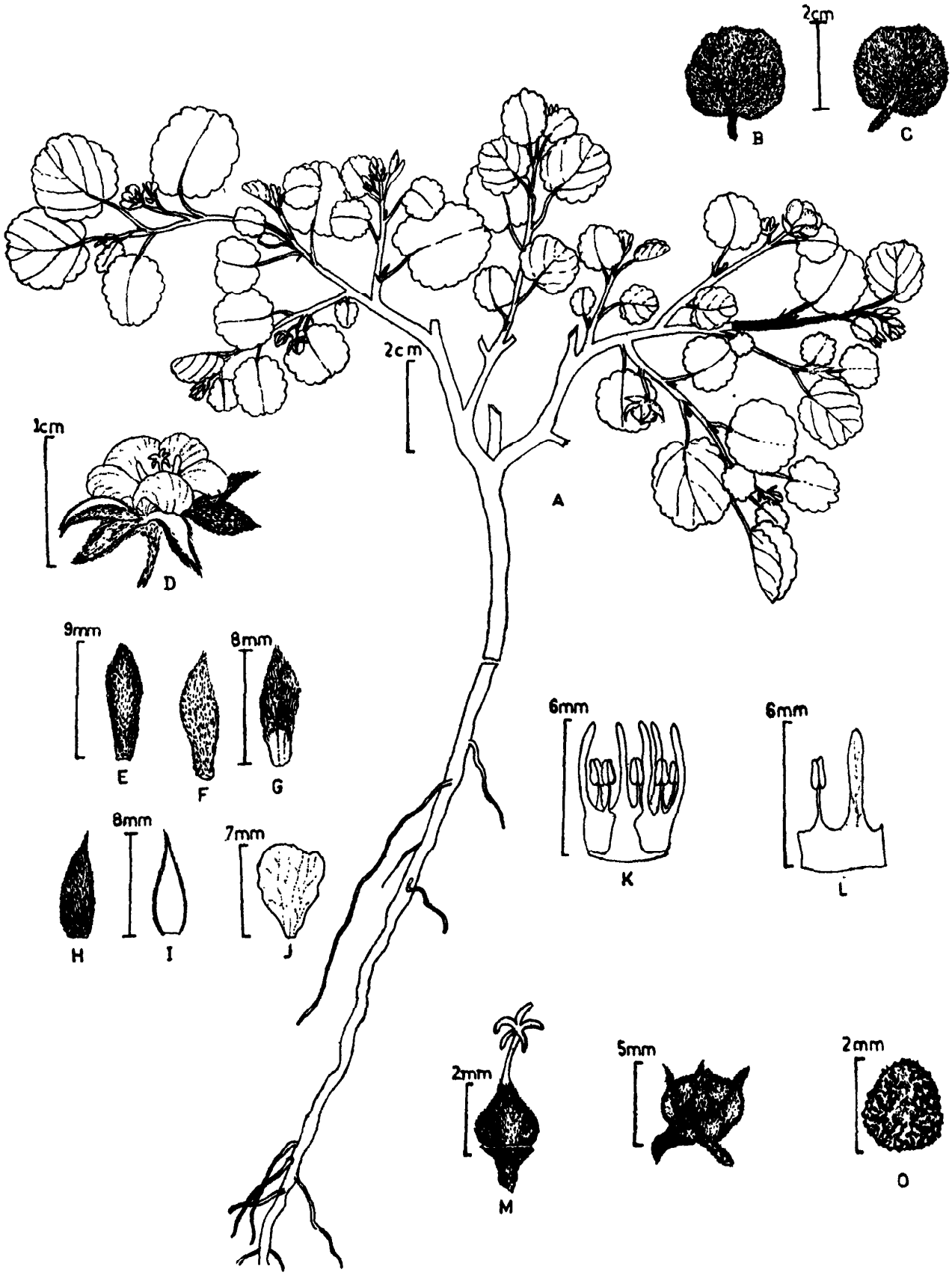
MELHANIA BALAKRISHNANII (STERCULIACEAE) — A NEW SPECIES FROM TAMIL NADU, INDIA

A new species of *Melhania balakrishnanii* has been described with illustrations.

Melhania balakrishnanii K. Ravikumar, R. Ganesan *et* K. Ramamurthy *sp. nov.* A *M. Cannabina* Wight, habito prostrato ; foliis orbicularis ad sub-orbicularis ; floribus axillaribus et terminalibus, solitariis vel geminis ; bracteolis oblongo-lanceolatis ; lobis calycis *ca* 8 × 2.5 mm ; eructibus globosis differt.

Holotypus : K. Ravikumar & R. Ganesan 86870 (CAL), isotypi in MH.

Herbs, prostrate, stout, stellate-tomentose ; taproots up to 50 cm long, woody. Leaves alternate, orbicular to suborbicular, rarely ovate, cordate to truncate at base, obtuse to truncate at apex, 0.4-2.2 × 0.3-2.1 cm, irregularly crenate-dentate along margins, brownish tomentose above, greyish tomentose beneath, with scattered, shiny, resinous glands on both surfaces ; veins up to 4-paired, obscure ; petioles 0.7-1.3 cm long, terete, tomentose. Stipules filiform, *ca* 2 mm long, caducous, tomentose, reddish-brown. Flowers axillary and terminal, solitary or in 2-flowered fascicle ; peduncles *ca* 8 mm long, terete, tomentose ; pedicels 2-4 mm long, terete, tomentose ; bracts oblong-lanceolate, acute at apex, *ca* 9 × 2 mm, tomentose on both sides ; bracteoles oblong-lanceolate, acute at apex, 7-9 × 1-2 mm, tomentose on both sides. Sepals 5, equal, ovate-lanceolate, acuminate at apex, *ca* 8 × 2.5 mm, ciliate along margins, yellow and glabrous inside, grey tomentose outside. Petals 5, obovate, cuneate at base, emarginate at apex, 6-7 × 4-5 mm, venose, shorter than sepals, bright yellow. Staminal cups up to 2 mm long, glabrous, yellow ; stamens 5,



Melhania balakrishnanii K. Ravikumar, R. Ganesan *et* K. Ramamurthy *sp. nov.*

Figs. A—O. A. Habit. B-C. Leaf dorsal and ventral view. D. Flower entire. E. Bract. F-G. Bracteoles-dorsal and ventral view. H-I. Sepal—dorsal and ventral view. J. Petal. K. Staminal cup with stamens and staminodes. L. Stamen and staminode. M. Ovary with style and stigmatic lobes. N. Fruit with persistent calyx. O. Seed.

alternate to staminodes ; filaments *ca* 1 mm long, yellow ; anthers oblongoid, 1-1.5 mm long, 2-lobed, yellow ; staminodes linear-oblong, obtuse at apex, *ca* 4 mm long, venose, yellow. Ovary ovoid, *ca* 2 mm long, hirsute ; styles *ca* 4 mm long, terete, glabrous ; stigmas 5-partite, subulate, yellow. Fruit globose, *ca* 5 mm across, 5-locular, 1-4 seeds in each locule. Seeds trigonous, *ca* 2 mm across, muricate, black.

Holotype : Tamil Nadu, V. O. Chidhambaranar district, Alankarathattu Coast near Tuticorin at sea level, 27 April, 1988 *K. Ravikumar and R. Ganesan* 86870 (CAL) ; Isotypes in MH.

This new species is rare along the coastal sands, found associated with *Polycarpaea corymbosa* (L.) Lam., *Cleome angustifolia* Forsk., and *Polygala chinensis* L.

This species is allied to *Melhania cannabina* Wight, and in some characters it is also closely resembles to *M. ovata* (Cav.) Spreng, but markedly differs from them by the characters shown in the table.

This species is named to honour Dr. N. P. Balakrishnan, Deputy Director, Botanical Survey of India, Coimbatore, for his valuable contribution to the field of Plant Taxonomy.

Sl. No.	*Melhania cannabina* Wight	*M. balakrishnanii sp. nov.*	*M. ovata* (Cav.) Spreng
1.	Erect shrub	Prostrate herb	Prostrate herb
2.	Leaves oblong, *ca* 6.3 × 4 cm ; petioles *ca* 3 cm long	Leaves orbicular to suborbicular, rarely ovate, *ca* 2.2 × 2.1 cm ; petioles *ca* 1.3 cm long	Leaves broadly elliptic-ovate or ovate ; petoles *ca* 6 mm long
3.	Flowers 2-4 in each fascicle ; peduncles shorter or equal to petioles	Flowers solitary or 2 in each fascicle ; peduncles shorter than the petioles	Flowers 2-4 in each fascicle ; peduncles as long as or longer than the petioles
4.	Bracteoles lanceolate	Bracteoles oblong-lanceolate	Bracteoles linear
5.	Pedicels shorter than the peduncles	Pedicels shorter than the peduncles	Pedicels equal or slightly longer than the peduncles
6.	Calyx lobes *ca* 10 × 4 mm	Calyx lobes *ca* 8 × 2.5 mm	Calyx lobes *ca* 7 × 3 mm
7.	Fruits subgibbous, shorter than the calyx	Fruits globose, shorter than the calyx	Fruits ovate, slightly longer than the calyx

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