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# A NEW VARIETY OF *SONERILA ELEGANS* WIGHT (MELASTOMATACEAE) FROM KERALA, INDIA

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ABSTRACT

A new variety of *Sonerila elegans* Wight has been described from Kerala

Wight (Spicilegium Neilgherrense 1 : 58, t. 67/3. 1846) described *Sonerila elegans,* based on a collection from Sispara, Kerala. *S. elegans* is characterised by puberulous calyx tube and hirsute capsules. After type collection *S. elegans* was further collected only from the type locality by Gamble. Beddome in 1878 and Fischer in 1910 collected some materials which were closer to *S. elegans,* but those specimens were characterised by glabrous calyx tubes and glabrous capsules. Subsequent collection other than from Sispara, also show this glabrous nature of calyx tube and capsules. Critical study of all these specimens reveal that these glabrous gatherings are taxonomically distinct from *S. elegans* var. *elegans* and hence a new varietal rank is given. The same is described here with illustrations.

**Sonerila elegans** Wight var. **beddomei** Giri et Nayar, var. *nov.*

A typo differt, pedunculis, calycis tubus, capsulisque glabris.

*Typus* : Palghat hills, Kerala, 1878, *Beddome* s.n. (Holotypus CAL).

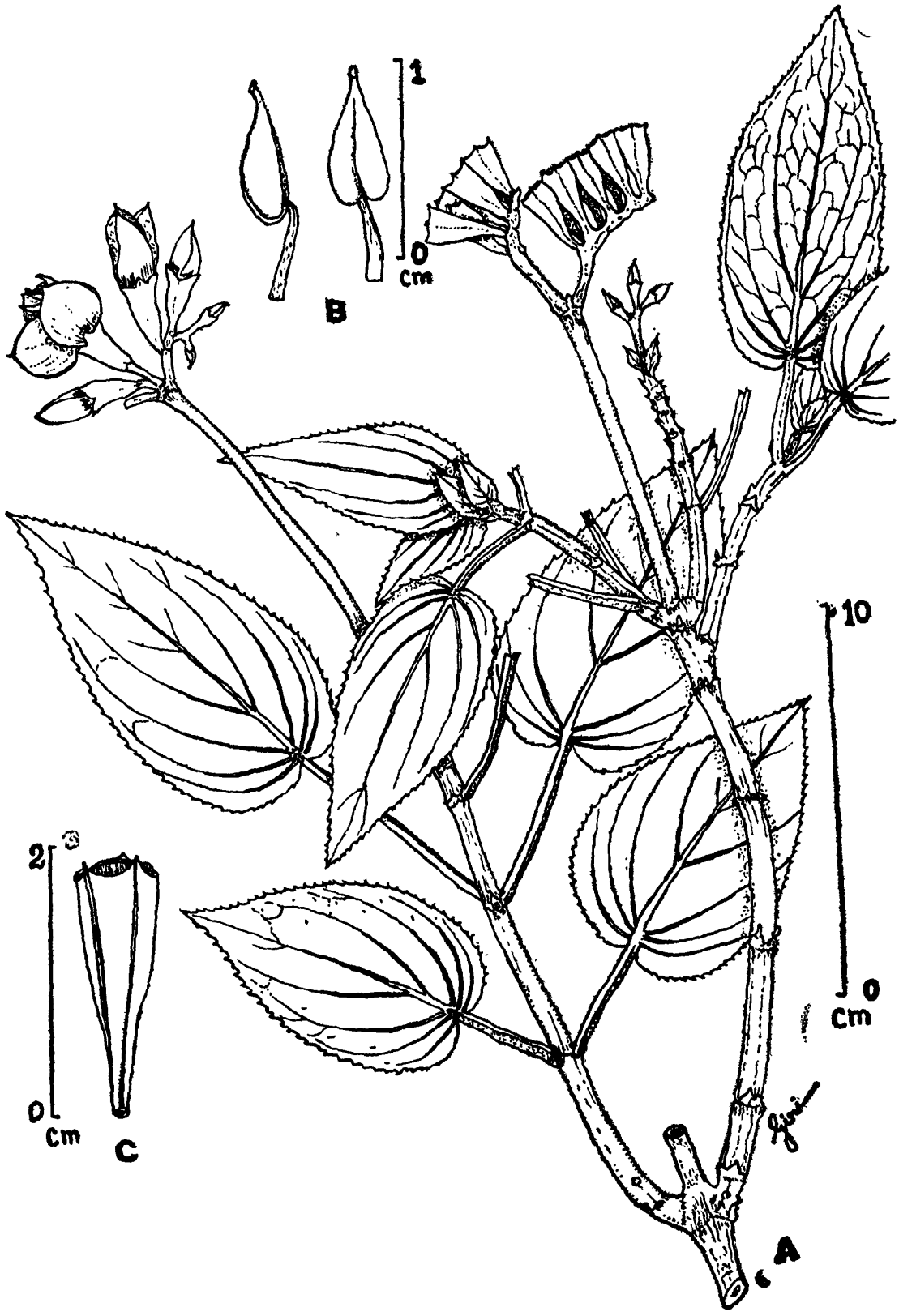
Erect herbs, rarely decumbent, base woody, branches subquadrangular, internodes (0.4-) 1.0-5.0 (-12.0) cm long. Leaves ovate to ovate-lanceolate, (4.0-) 6.0-9.0 (-12.0) × (1.8-) 3.5-4.5 (-6.5) cm, base subrounded to sub-cordate, equal sided, apex acute to shortly acuminate, 2-3 pairs of nerves arising from the base of the lamina and 1-2 pairs arising higher up from the midrib, nerves prominent and more or less winged beneath, margin serrate, both surfaces of leaves glabrous or rarely a few scattered hairs occur near the margin, turn dull green or light brown on drying, membranous ; petioles (1.5-) 2.0-5.0 (-7.0) cm long, weak, glabrous. Inflorescence branched or unbranched scorpoid cymes, primary peduncles 6.0-8.0 cm long, glabrous, secondary peduncles 0.5-2.0 cm long, glabrous, bracts small, ovate-acute, deciduous, 4-10 flowered ; pedicels 4.0-6.0 mm long, glabrous. Calyx tube 7-9 mm long and 3.5-4.0 mm broad at apex, urn shaped, glabrous, faintly ridged, lobes 2.0 × 1.0-1.5 mm, broadly triangular or ovate, midrib not conspicuous, glabrous ; petals broadly ovate or ovate-orbicular, 13-15 × 10-12 mm, midrib prominent, apiculate or mucronate, mauve. Stamens : filaments 6-7 mm long, filiform, glabrous, anthers oblong, 7.5-8.5 mm long including a short beak, pore oblique ; style 12-14 mm long, stigma capitate. Capsules turbinate, gradually widened above, 10-12 mm long and upto 6 mm wide at apex, base gradually merging with the pedicel, capsules with 3 strong and 3 inconspicuous ridges. Seeds many, muricate.

*Type* : Palghat hills, Kerala, .....1878, *Beddome* s.n. (Holotype CAL).

*Fls.* : Nov.-Jan. *Frts.* : Jan.-April.

*Distribution* : INDIA : Kerala, Endemic.

Date of receipt : 21.3.86. Date of acceptance : 10.4.86.




Figs. A-C : *Sonerila elegans* Wight var. *beddomei* Giri et Nayar. A. Habit. B. Stamens. C. Capsule.

*Specimens other than holotype*: Karimalai in Shola, South Malabar, 5000′ (1520 m) 21.1.1910, *C. E. C. Fischer* 1646 (CAL); Poovancholai, Palghat Dist., 29.4.1980, *V. J. Nair* 67348 (CAL, MH).

The variety differs from the var. *elegans* by its glabrous peduncles, calyx tubes and capsules.

The variety is named after its collector R. H. Beddome who first noted the glabrous flowers and capsules and remarked "cf. *S. elegans* Wight".