NEW RECORD OF THE GRASS GENUS *PHIPPSIA* R. BR. FROM INDIA

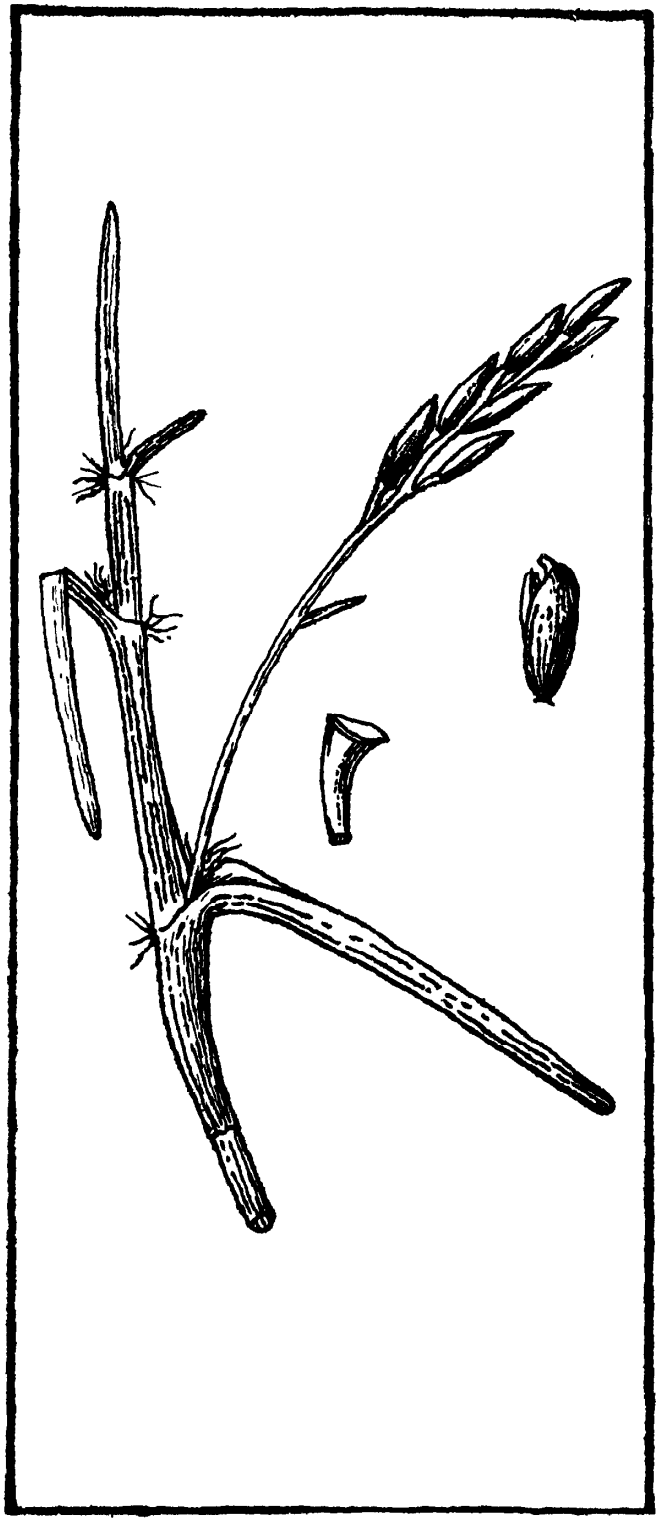
INTRODUCTION

The genus *Phippsia* was only represented in India by a single species *P. himalaica* collected from Alpine Western Himalayas (Hook. f. 1896). Since then the genus has not been described in any of the taxonomic enumerations in India. Bor (1960) transferred the species to *Colpodium* as a new combination *Colpodium himalaicum* (Hook. f.) Bor, and thus the existence of the genus in India was lost.

While describing the genus representing a single species, Hooker had clearly indicated the affinity of *Phippsia* with *Colpodium*. On Hooker's request Stapf did extensive study of Indian materials and confirmed *Phippsia algida* as the only arctic species in that genus. An extensive survey of the literature and publications concerning the Indian grasses particularly of the cold regions revealed that there is no other record of the genus *Phippsia* in India (Collet 1921, Gupta 1960, Kihara 1953, Osmaston 1978). Further, it has been established from the literature of the grasses of temperate regions (Tutin 1980; Komarov *et al.* 1968; Hitchcock 1950; Gould 1968) that *Phippsia algida* is represented in arctic regions of both hemispheres. In such a vast geographical range there ought to be some variability in the populations of a species. Variations in plant height, inflorescence, spikelet size, lemma, glumes and anther characters have been reported in European, American, Russian and Indian materials, yet the whole population has been considered as one species. The reasons for variability may be tested experimentally for ecotypes which is always expected in large geographical range of a species.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PLANT

Phippsia algida (Solander) R. Br. in Parry, Jour. Voy. N. W. Pass., Suppl. App. 284. 1824. Clor. Melvill. (1824) 285—*Agrostis algida* Soland. Phipps, Voy. 200. 1774 (Fig.).



Phippsia algida : Culm ×1. Pedicel, Floret, Grain ×10

Perennial, culms densely tufted, 2 - 10 cm, usually procumbent. Leaves 1 - 2 mm wide, soft, glabrous, with boat-shaped tips; ligule 1.2 - 1.6 mm triangular. Panicle 1-3 cm long, contracted, branches smooth. Spikelets 1.3 1.6 mm (rarely 1.8 mm), broadly ovate, glabrous or somewhat hairy in the lower half, especially on the veins, often violet, purplish or yellow purple. Glumes very minute or obsolete, usually caducous, if present 0.3 - 0.6 mm long. Lemma about 1.5 mm, broadly ovate, glabrous or scantly pubescent. Palea almost equalling lemma, glabrous or pubescent on the keels. Stamens 1 - 2, anthers 0.3 - 0.5 mm. Grain dark brown, equalling the palea.

ECOLOGICAL NOTES

Flowering and fruiting: January to February. Usually this species prefers moist, open places in cold regions of the world. In Russia, Europe and U.S.A. flowering occurs from July to August.

Specimen examined: ALLAHABAD: *Roy* 30016 (BSA).

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