

HEDYCHIUM VENUSTUM WT.—ITS TYPE LOCALITY AND ENDEMISM

Hedychium Koen. (Zingiberaceae) comprises of 31 species of generally ornamental plants, with a distribution mostly confined to North Eastern India. However, *H. coronarium* Koen., the type species has a "wide" distribution including South India. On the other hand, *H. venustum* Wt. happens to be the only species naturally distributed only in South India, and that too, in very limited loci. Eversince Wight described this species in 1853, its type locality has been uncertain. Wight remarked in his *Icones* "This figure is taken from a dried specimen the station of which is not recorded; I think Coorg" (underline ours). During a revisionary study of the genus, this uncertainty led us to a detailed search. This resulted in the discovery of two specimens at CAL, collected by Wight himself in courtallum and Nilgiri hills, in 1835 and 1845 respectively, well before he had described his new species. Burkill in his *Chapters in the History of Botany in India* (p. 19 1965) mentions that Wight was mostly collecting from the Nilgiris to Vellore, and that he was receiving specimens from W. Munro and G. S. Gough from Coorg. These two facts together implied that Wight may have mixed up or mislaid data for his specimen, and attributed his *Hedychium* to Coorg, possibly thinking that it may have come to him from either Munro or Gough. In recent times Coorg has been fairly well explored by R. K. Arora, A. S. Rao and T. A. Rao. Particularly A. S. Rao, has given some detailed attention and covered many localities in Coorg and in all the seasons. None of their collections include the *Hedychium* in question. We can therefore conclude that Wight's *Hedychium* could not be from Coorg (notwithstanding his remark). A search in the Madras Herbarium (MH, Botanical Survey of India, Southern Circle, Coimbatore) brought out a collection of

Ellis 34844 in 1970 from Naduvattam, in the Nilgiris. Further field work in the area enabled the discovery of a population of about 30 plants of *Hedychium venustum*. These plants were growing on a shady moist hill-slope amidst tall grasses, sedges and other herbs, along a streamlet, at an altitude of about 1800 m. The above facts taken together lead us to conclude that the dried specimen Wight mentions did not come from Coorg, but from somewhere in the Nilgiris, and most likely Naduvattam. We venture to indicate this as the type locality for *Hedychium venustum* Wight. Further, a review of the sparse collections in the Herbaria, and the observations made during field work, particularly for the collection of *Hedychiums*, show that *H. venustum* has been collected from few places. Apart from the Nilgiris, the other collections known are: *Stocks & Law* s.n. (CAL, Accn. No. 466509) from Malabar, CONCAN (precise locality and date not known). As Burkill (1965) had stated that *Stocks* and *Law* were collected in Bombay Presidency (Present Maharashtra) and its vicinity, since Concan is the part of Maharashtra hence the specimen must have come from Maharashtra. And *Meebold* 12274 (CAL, Accn. No. 466509) from Kavalay, Chohin (Previously Cochin State) 4000' (ca 1300 m) Nov. 1909, the last collection from Malabar (present Kerala) area being nearly 80 years ago. The species is endemic to this limited area in present day Maharashtra, Tamilnadu and Kerala, and even in the places of their occurrence, they are quite rare. Hence, this is a candidate species for conservation. On the basis of our study, a short description of the species is provided.

***Hedychium venustum* Wt.** Ic. 6: 17. t. 2012. 1853; Wall. in Kew Bull. Bot. 5: 328. 1853; Moran. Monograph 25. 1862,

Baker in Hook. f. Fl. Brit. Ind. 6: 226. 1892. Seham in Engler Pflanzerec Heft 20. 50. 1904. G. E. C. Fischer in Gamble's Fl. Madr. 3: 1038. 1928. rep. ed. 1957.

Rhizomatous herbs 0.7 - 1 m tall. *Leaves* elliptic, pubescent abaxially along the midrib. *Inflorescence*, a lax spike. *Flowers* white or pale yellow with a pink blotch at the mouth; bracts ovate, yellowish green; bracteoles oblong ovate, white or pale yellow; *Staminodes* oblanceolate, white or pale yellow; lip *oblanceolate*, white or pale yellow with pink blotch at mouth; *anthers* yellow; stigma funnel shaped, green, pubescent.

Flowering from July to September. Confined to very limited areas in Tamil Nadu and Kerala, and very badly in need of conservation.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks are due to Dr. S. K. Jain, Director, for facilities and to the Botanical Survey of India, for award of fellowship to Jr. Author.

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ARUNDINELLA SETOSA TRIN. VAR. LANIFERA C. E. C. FISCHER— AN INTERESTING RECORD FROM MADHYA PRADESH

Of the 18 species of the genus *Arundinella* Raddi occurring in India, *A. setosa* Trin. is represented by three varieties. While the two varieties viz. var. *setosa* and var. *esetosa* Bor are well distributed throughout the country, var. *lanifera* C. E. C. Fischer, based on Gamble's collection (No. 21307), is considered endemic to South India. It has been collected by the author from Madai in Bilaspur district, Madhya Pradesh (Murti, 1947—deposited in BSA); thus significantly extending its range of distribution to north. A critical review of the specimens of *Arundinella* in various herbaria may reveal a still wider range of its distribution.

***Arundinella setosa* Trin. var. *lanifera* C. E. C. Fischer** in Gamble, Fl. Madras, 1801. 1934; Bor, Grass. Bur. Cey. Ind. and Pak. 425. 1960.

Perennial caespitose stoloniferous grass;

culms densely woolly at base. Inflorescence a loose panicle, 15-25 cm long. Spikelets subsecond, pedicelled, 1-2-flowered; lower glume 3-nerved, setose; upper glume 3-5-nerved, setose; lower lemma 3-7-nerved, male, occasionally neuter; palea hyaline, 2-keeled; upper lemma scaberulous in fruit, articulate at base and deciduous with fruit, hermaphrodite, awned; lodicules 2; stamens 2; caryopsis free within the lemma.

Flowering & fruiting: August-December.

Ecology: Forming clumps on rocky grounds and hill slopes, in dry situations.

Specimens examined: MADHYA PRADESH: Bilaspur: Madai, August 1973, Murti 19471 (BSI). TAMIL NADU: Chingleput; Kambakam Durg, 16th March, 1907. Bourne 2463 (Acc. No. 526503—CAL).

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