Taiwania, 58(3): 226–228, 2013
DOI: 10.6165/tai.2013.58.226

NOTE

Argostemma timorense Benn. — a New Addition to Indian Rubiaceae from Great Nicobar Island

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(Manuscript received 17 January 2013; accepted 04 July 2013)

ABSTRACT: *Argostemma timorense* is reported as new record for India from Great Nicobar Island. This species, so far considered as endemic to Java, was collected from inland evergreen forests of Great Nicobar Island. Detailed descriptions, illustration and photograph are provided.

KEY WORDS: *Argostemma timorense,* Great Nicobar, India, New addition, Rubiaceae.

INTRODUCTION

Argostemma Wall. is a large palaeotropical genus of the tribe Argostemmatae belonging to Rubiaceae. The genus is widely distributed in tropical and sub-tropical Asia with two disjunct species in eastern Africa, although, most taxa are confined to Southeast Asia (Sridith and Puff, 2000). The genus comprises of c. 220 described species of which about 2/3rd of species are endemic to Borneo (Bremer, 1989; Sridith and Puff, 2000). In India this genus is represented by 9 species (Santapau and Henry, 1973). So far in Andaman & Nicobar Islands, species such as *Argostemma neurocalyx* Miq. and *A. tavoyanum* Wall. ex Benn. (Syn. *A. soneriloides* Kurz) are reported under this genus (Ridley, 1927; Vasudeva Rao, 1986; Mathew, 1998; Pandey and Diwakar, 2008). *Argostemma timorense* Benn., a species so far considered to be endemic to Java was collected during floristic exploration of Campbell Bay National Park, Great Nicobar. This species was collected from the canopy closed inland evergreen forests at an altitude of c. 600 m in Mt. Thullier. It is reported here as a new addition to the flora of India. Detailed descriptions, key and illustrations are provided for easy identification of these phytogeographically interesting species.

TAXONOMIC TREATMENTS

Key to the *Argostemma* species in Andaman & Nicobar Islands

1a. Flowers 4-merous; anthers free 2
1b. Flowers 5-merous; anthers connate into a tube ..... ***A. timorense***
2a. Leaves two, frequently with white spots, obtuse at apex ..... ***A. neurocalyx***
2b. Leaves usually in whorls of 4 (rarely two), without white spots, acute at apex ..... ***A. tavoyanum***

Argostemma timorense Benn. Pl. Jav. Rar. i. 95. 1838; Backer & Bakhuizen in Fl. Java 2: 293. 1965.
Figs. 1 & 2

Herbs, creeping, up to 15 cm high. Stems pubescent. Leaves unequal, elliptic, 1.5–4.5 × 0.8–2 cm, acute to acuminate at apex, entire, oblique at base, scabrid on both surfaces; petioles 3–5 mm long, puberulous; stipules foliaceous, 2–3 × 1.5–2 mm, scabrid on lower surface. Cymes terminal, 1–3 flowered; pedicels c. 1.5 cm long, puberulous; bracteoles 4, ovate to lanceolate, 2–3 × 0.5–1 mm, 1-nerved, membranous. Flowers greenish-white, 5–8 mm across. Calyx tube c. 1 cm long, up to 2 cm long in fruits, puberulous; lobes 5, ovate, c. 1 × 1 mm, acute to acuminate at apex. Corolla campanulate, deeply 5-lobed; lobes lanceolate, c. 4 × 1.5 mm, 3-nerved. Stamens 5; filaments distinct, c. 1 mm long; anthers connate, c. 3 mm long. Ovary 2-locular; style c. 4 mm long; stigma clavate. Fruits not seen.

Flower: May–July.

Specimens examined: **INDIA**: Great Nicobar Island, Campbell Bay National Park, Mt. Thullier, c. 600 m, inland evergreen forests, *J.Jayanthi* 19356 (PBL).

Ecology: Rare; in evergreen forests at the hill top of Mt. Thullier, growing on moss covered rocks and tree trunks especially on the tree fern, *Sphaeropteris albosetacea* (Bedd.) R.M.Tryon. This species was found growing only in the wet canopy closed evergreen forests of Great Nicobar Island.

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Fig. 1. *Argostemma timorense* Benn. – Habit

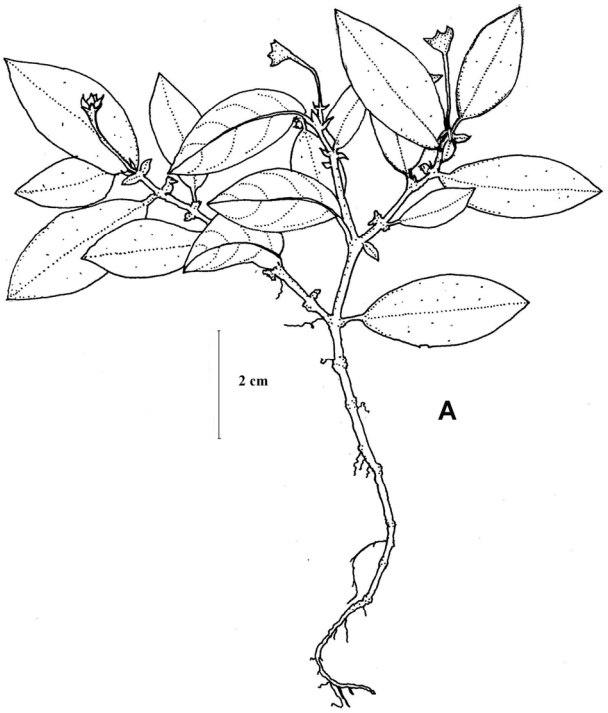


Fig. 2. *Argostemma timorense* Benn. A: Habit

Note: Earlier recorded from Java. The present collection from Great Nicobar Island forms a new record for India as well as shows its extended distribution in the Sumatran province.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors are thankful to Director, Botanical Survey of India for facilities & Dr. H.J. Chowdhery, Additional Director (Retd.), Botanical Survey of India for encouragement. Thanks to Dept. of Environment & Forests for giving permission to explore the Great Nicobar Island.

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印度茜草科的新紀錄種－*Argostemma timorense* Benn.

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(收稿日期：2013年1月17日；接受日期：2013年7月4日)

摘要：本文報導在大尼科巴群島發現的*Argostemma timorense*，這次的發現為此物種增添了在印度的新紀錄分布，同時並提供本種的分類描述與圖片以供辨認。本物種原為爪哇群島的特有種。

關鍵詞：*Argostemma timorense*、大尼科巴群島、印度、新紀錄、茜草科。

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