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NOTE

A REPORT ON ADDITIONS TO THE FLORA OF ANDAMAN & NICOBAR ISLANDS, INDIA

Johny Kumar Tagore, Ponnaiah Jansirani & Sebastian Soosairaj

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The Andaman & Nicobar Islands, with a total geographical area of 8,250km², is the largest archipelago representing an arcade of Islands situated about 1,200km off the southeastern coast of India in the Bay of Bengal, stretching from Myanmar in the north to Sumatra (Indonesia) in the south (6.750–13.683 N & 92.200–93.950 E).

These Islands harbour luxuriant lowland rainforests besides wetlands, mangroves, and coral reefs. There are 106 protected areas in the Andaman & Nicobar Islands, including nine national parks, 96 wildlife sanctuaries, and one biosphere reserve (Rao 1986). The floral elements of these Islands often show a close affinity with that of Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Thailand, and Sri Lanka. The phytodiversity of these islands is unique and one of the richest in India in terms of diversity with a remarkable degree of genetic variations.

While working on the 'Quantitative assessment and mapping of plant resources of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands', some specimens were collected from Dhanikari Botanical Gardens, South Andaman and Palmtikiri, Little Andaman Islands. A critical study revealed that they were hitherto unreported from this archipelago. After a detailed consultation of literature (Srivastava 1998; Sinha 1999; Sabu 2006; Pandey & Diwakar 2008) and a critical examination of the specimens, they were identified as *Monochoria hastata* and *Alpinia malaccensis*. Thus, the present findings constitute new distribution records for Andaman & Nicobar Islands. Detailed descriptions along with field images are provided for these two species to facilitate easy identification for future studies.

A REPORT ON ADDITIONS TO THE FLORA OF ANDAMAN & NICOBAR ISLANDS, INDIA

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Alpinia malaccensis

(Burm. f.) Rosc., Trans. Linn. Soc. London 8: 345. 1807; Hook. f., Fl. Brit. India 6: 255. 1820. *Maranta malaccensis* Burm.f., Fl. Ind. 2. 1768.

Rhizomatous herbs. Leafy stems robust, to 3m high. Leaves narrowly lanceolate, acuminate, up to 60cm × 7cm, usually pubescent; ligule c. 1cm long, hairy, coriaceous, entire; sheaths shortly pubescent; petiole 3–5 cm, rounded, pubescent. Inflorescence erect or slightly curved, main axis pubescent; bracts absent. Cincinni of two very shortly pedicellate flowers or reduced to a single flower, stalk 0.5–1.5 cm, pubescent; bracteoles white, open to base, 1.5–2.0 cm, folded around the bud becoming quickly deciduous as the flower opens, lightly pubescent at apex. Calyx white, 2cm, pubescent at least at the apex, shortly 3-lobed and deeply split unilaterally. Corolla white, tube up to 1cm, glabrous; lateral lobes 3cm × 1cm, ciliate-margined, dorsal lobe broader, also ciliate. Labellum yellow-orange, heavily lined with scarlet strips, 3–5 cm, 3cm across at widest part, sides incurved, narrowing to an emarginate

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Image 1. *Alpinia malaccensis* (Burm. f.) Rosc.: A - Habit | B - Flower | C - Fruit. © M.V. Ramana.

apex, with two papillose swellings at the base. Lateral staminodes subulate, less than 5mm; filaments c. 1cm; anther of equal length or longer, thecae parallel, connective not prolonged into a crest. Epigynous glands 5mm, free from each other. Ovary 5mm, pubescent, trilocular. Capsules turning red at length, globose, up to 3cm in diameter, shortly pubescent.

Flowering and fruiting: May–November.

Distribution and habitat: Extends from northeastern India (and now from Andaman & Nicobar Islands) to Indochina, southwards to Peninsular Malaysia and Java. Found along banks of streams in evergreen forests.

Specimens examined: 0965 (PBL, CAL), 22.v.2012, India, Andaman & Nicobar Islands, South Andaman Islands, Dhanikari Botanical Garden, 11.575N & 92.664E, 35m, coll. M.V. Ramana & J.K. Tagore.

Note: The species was collected from the Nicobar Islands and introduced in Dhanikari Botanical Gardens, South Andaman.

Monochoria hastata

(L.) Solms in A. de Candolle & C. de Candolle, Monogr. Phan. 4: 523. 1883; Hook.f., Fl. Brit. India 6: 362. 1892. *Pontederia hastata* L., Sp. Pl. 1: 288. 1753.

Perennial aquatic herbs. Vegetative stems often long and robust; 60–120 cm. Radical leaves with sheath broadened at base; leaf blade triangular or triangular-ovate, 5–15(–25) cm × 3–15 cm, base sagittate to hastate, apex acute to acuminate; petiole 25–75 cm. Flowering stems erect or obliquely so, 45–80 cm. Inflorescences erect or suberect, remaining so after anthesis, sub-umbellate to shortly racemose, 15–50-flowered; peduncle distinctly shorter than associated leaf petiole. Pedicels 1–3 cm. Perianth segments bluish with green median vein and reddish blotch, ovate, 9–15 mm. Larger stamen: anther 5–6 mm, bluish. Smaller stamens: five, filiform; anthers 3.0–3.5 mm, pale yellow. Style densely and shortly spreading, hairy at apex. Capsule oblong, 6–7 mm. Seeds brown, oblong; wings c. 10mm.



Image 2. *Monochoria hastata* (L.) Solms: A - Habit | B - Flower | C - Fruit. © M.V. Ramana.

Flowering: August–December.

Fruiting: December–March.

Distribution and habitat: It is found in marshy regions near waterfalls. It also occurs in wet swamps, freshwater pools, drainage channels, mudflats in rivers, and along canal banks. It is a purely submerged aquatic herb. It is recorded as a component of floating mat vegetation. This species occurs in Bhutan, India (throughout Assam and other northeastern states; also as weeds in northern and central states of India and now from Andaman & Nicobar Islands), Nepal, Sri Lanka, and southeastern Asia, extending to New Guinea and Australia.

Specimens examined: 1089 (PBL, CAL), 13.xi.2012, India, Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Little Andaman, Palmtikiri, 10.617N & 92.508E, 120m, coll. M.V. Ramana.

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