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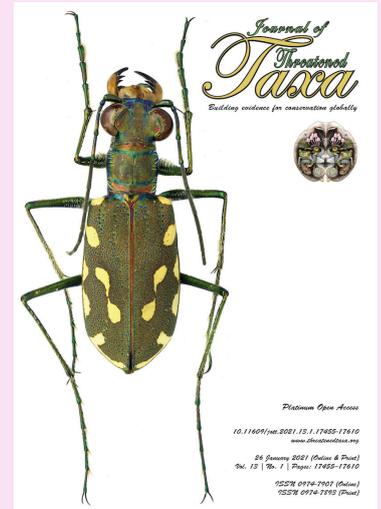
NOTE

STAR GRASS LILY *IPHIGENIA STELLATA* BLATTER (COLCHICACEAE) – A NEW ADDITION TO THE FLORA OF GUJARAT, INDIA

Mitesh B. Patel

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NOTE

Star Grass Lily *Iphigenia stellata* Blatter (Colchicaceae) – a new addition to the flora of Gujarat, India

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The genus *Iphigenia* Kunth (Colchicaceae) comprises 12 species distributed from tropical Africa, over Madagascar and India to Australia (Govaerts & Persson 2014). In India, it is represented by seven species, viz., *I. indica* (L.) Kunth, *I. magnifica* Ansari & R.S.Rao, *I. mysorensis* Arekal & S.N.Ramaswamy, *I. pallida* Baker, *I. sahyadrica* Ansari & R.S.Rao, *I. stellata* Blatter, and *I. ratnagirica* S.M.Almeida & M.R.Almeida (Lekhak et al. 2015). Out of these, only one species (*I. indica*) has been reported so far from the state of Gujarat, India (Shah 1978; GEC 1996).

A recent botanical expedition in southern Gujarat resulted in the collection of an interesting specimen of *Iphigenia* whose characters were found to be different from hitherto reported species (*I. indica*). Critical studies of the type description and other relevant literature revealed it to be *I. stellata*, a species hitherto not reported from Gujarat State of India (Blatter & McCann 1928). A detailed description and photographs of the species is provided here to facilitate easy identification.

Iphigenia stellata Blatter

in J. Bombay Nat. Hist. Soc. 32: 734. 1928 emend. Ansari & R.S.Rao in Bull. Bot. Surv. India 15: 120, f. 1–7b. 1972; Karthik. et al., Fl. Ind. Enum. Monocot. 96. 1989

(Liliaceae) (Image 1).

Common name: Star Grass Lily, Gulabi Bhuichakra (Marathi).

Perennial herbs, 8–14 cm in height; corms ovate-subglobose 0.8–1.4 cm in diameter, tunicate with light brown sheaths, gradually narrowing to a neck above. Stem up to 10cm, high, rigid to flexuous. Leaves 4–6, 8–14 × 0.9–1.0 cm, grass like, sessile, linear to linear-lanceolate, apex acute or mucronate, base long-sheathing. Flowers 3–7 in a short terminal raceme, white-bright pink, pedicellate. Bracts up to 5cm long, linear-lanceolate. Pedicels 1.0–1.6 cm long, stout, grooved, supporting a petal. Perianth segments 6, 0.5–1.2 × 0.2–0.4 cm, oblong-ovate, broad in the middle, acuminate at apex. Stamens up to 0.5cm long, light purple; filaments straight, rigid, slightly flattened at inner side; anthers 0.8–1.2 cm long, purple; pollen yellow. Ovary green, obovoid, shorter than the styles; style 3, purple, recurved; ovules ovoid-oblong. Capsules 0.8–1.0 cm long, subglobose or obovoid, loculicidal, deeply grooved. Seeds 18–26, brownish-black, subglobose-ovoid, 0.2cm long, irregular, flattened on one side.

Habitat: Growing on moist gravelly soil in most open area.

Editor: Anonymity requested

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Image 1. *Iphigenia stellata* in habitat.

Flowering and fruiting: June–September

Specimen examined: BVBRC136, viii.2018, India, Gujarat State, Dang District, Ahwa, Don Hill station (20.733°N, 73.863°E, 967m) coll. Mitesh Patel. Herbarium deposited at Bapalal Vaidya Botanical Research Centre (BVBRC), Department of Biosciences, VNSGU, Surat, Gujarat, India (Image 2).

Distribution: Maharashtra (Kolhapur, Satara, and Sindhudurg districts), Karnataka, and Gujarat (present study).

Conservation status: In Gujarat, the plant has so far been reported from only Don Hill station of Ahwa Taluka, Dang District. About six individuals were seen in this area, however, futuristic surveys are recommended to assess its status in different regions in Gujarat.

Note: *I. stellata* is easily distinguished from *I. indica* by its much larger flower and by the shape of the clawless petals. As per the IUCN threat criteria, it falls within the Endangered category. It is endemic to the Western Ghats of India and common to a few parts of Maharashtra. A few individuals were also collected

from the Mookambika Wildlife Sanctuary of Karnataka (Singh 2015). The present collection of this taxon from Dang District in the state of Gujarat is also a terminus of Western Ghats which warrants further explorations in the remote localities of Western Ghats so as to update its distribution and threat status.

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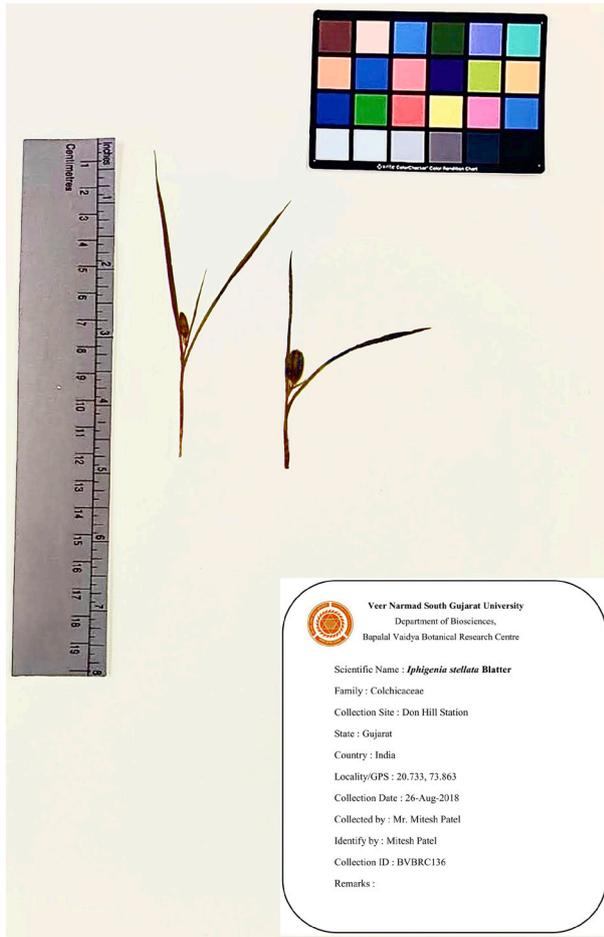


Image 2. Herbarium sheet of *Iphigenia stellata*.





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