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Cover: Common Keeled Skink *Eutropis carinata* in oil pastels, colour pencils, & micron pen adapted from photograph by H. Byju © Pooja Ramdas Patil.



Hunteria zeylanica (Retz.) Gardner ex Thwaites (Magnoliopsida: Gentianales: Apocyanaceae)—new addition and first genus record to the flora of Karnataka

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Hunteria is a genus of Apocynaceae comprising 13 species and was first described in 1824 by Roxburgh (POWO 2023). In southern India it is mainly represented by the tree species *Hunteria zeylanica* (Retz.) Gardner ex Thwaites which is native to eastern Africa and to Indo-Malaysia (WCSP 2023). In southern India, it is recorded from the evergreen forests of Kerala and Tamil Nadu. During the field work in Dodmane Ghat of Uttara Kannada district, Karnataka, a small tree was collected from the wet evergreen forest area. On closer identification with local flora (Gamble 1921; Saldanha 1984–1996; Bhat 2003; Puneekar & Lakshminarasimhan 2011) and further confirmation from Botanical Survey of India, southern regional centre, Coimbatore, it was confirmed to be *Hunteria zeylanica* (Retz.) Gardner ex Thwaites. Its earlier distribution was reported from the southern Western Ghats of Wayanad, Palakkad, Thrissur, Idukki, Kollam, & Thiruvananthapuram districts of Kerala and Kanyakumari & Tirunelveli of Tamil Nadu (Sasidharan 2011). The present study reports this evergreen tree

Hunteria zeylanica (Retz.) Gardner ex Thwaites, for the first time from Karnataka part of the Western Ghats.

Systematic treatment

Hunteria zeylanica (Retz.) Gardner ex Thwaites, Enum. Pl. Zeyl. 191. 1860. *Cameraria zeylanica* Retz., Obs. Bot. 4: 24. 1786. *Hunteria corymbosa* Roxb., Fl. Ind. 1: 695. 1832; Hook. f., Fl. Brit. India 3: 637. 1882; Gamble, Fl. Pres. Madras 808 (568). 1923; Vajr., Fl. Palghat Dist. 281. 1990. *Hunteria roxburghiana* Wight, Ic. t. 1294. 1846; Mohanan, Fl. Quilon Dist. 253. 1984; Pandurangan et al., Journ. Econ. Tax. Bot. 6: 271. 1985; Manilal, Fl. Silent Valley 174. 1988; M. Mohanan & Henry, Fl. Thiruvanthapuram 291. 1994; Subram., Fl. Thenmala Div. 219. 1995; Sasidh. & Sivar., Fl. Pl. Thrissur For. 280. 1996; Sasidh., Fl. Shenduruny WLS 203. 1997; Sasidh., Fl. Parambikulam WLS 189. 2002; Ratheesh Narayanan, Fl. Stud. Wayanad Dist. 520. 2009; Nayar et al. 2014.

Small evergreen tree 12 m tall; bark greyish-brown, lenticellate; milky latex from plant parts. Leaves

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CENTRE FOR URBAN ECOLOGY,
BIO-DIVERSITY, EVOLUTION
AND CLIMATE CHANGE

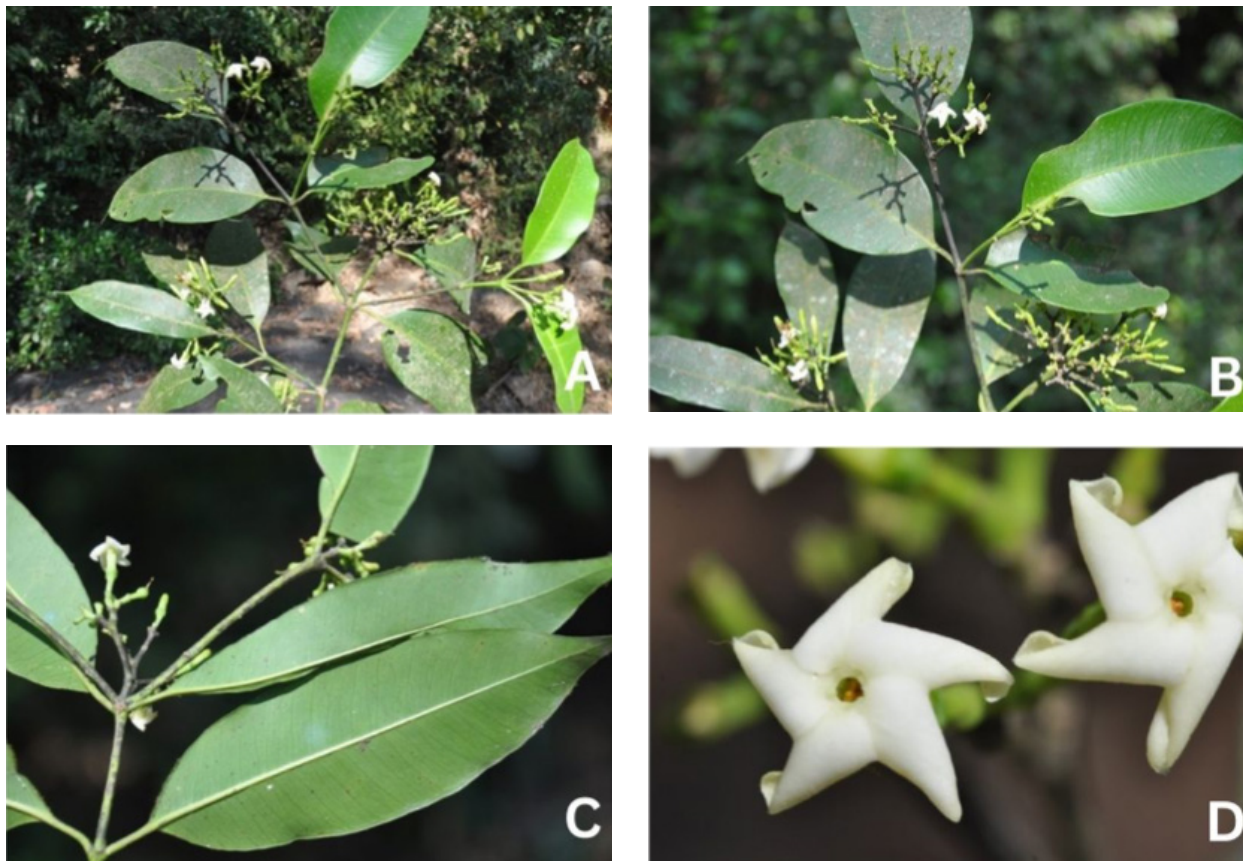


Image 1. *Hunteria zeylanica*: A—Flowering leafy twig from the locality | B—Flowering twig close up | C—Leaf close up dorsal side | D—Flower close up. © G. Ramachandra Rao.

simple, opposite, estipulate; petioles 1.2–1.6 cm long, glabrous, slender; lamina 9–15 x 3–5.5 cm, elliptic to elliptic-oblong; base acute or obtuse; apex acuminate; margin entire, slightly wavy, glabrous, coriaceous, shining above; lateral nerves many, slender, glabrous, looped near margin forming intramarginal nerve, intercostae reticulate, obscure. Flowers white, slightly fragrant, bisexual, in terminal to sub-terminal cymes; peduncles c.2 cm long. Calyx lobes five, small, 0.8 cm long, eglandular. Corolla salver shaped, lobes creamy white, acuminate, tips folded and twisted; tube 0.8 mm long; stamens five, inserted at the dilation of the tube, anthers lanceolate, apiculate, orange-brown, filaments hairy below. Carpels two, free, ovules two–four in each cell; style greenish, stigma yellowish-green, conical. Fruit of two fleshy berries.

Specimens collected: 178273 (MH) (Image 1), 2016, Karnataka: Dodmane Ghat, Uttara Kannada district, coll. G.R. Rao.

Habitat: Evergreen to semi-evergreen forests.

Flowering and Fruiting: February–June.

Distribution: Eastern Africa and Indo-Malesia.

Note: This plant slightly differs from southern Western Ghats population with having more broader leaves and corolla more twisted and white with folded petal.

Habitat and associated plants: The tree species occurred in evergreen forest along with several other trees such as *Diospyros paniculata*, *D. pruriens*, *Holigarna grahamii*, *Hydnocarpus pentandra*, *Hopea ponga*, and *Syzygium gardneri*. Only two trees of *Hunteria zeylanica* were encountered in the region, and were not found elsewhere even after extensive surveys in Uttara Kannada district. Though this species has Indo-Malesian distribution, in India it has a narrow distribution with very small population surviving in the central Western Ghats, Karnataka, while the other populations are in states of Kerala and Tamil Nadu. Presently the tree species is in a protected forest and is found intact with no immediate threat. But as the numbers are very small, these trees can swiftly cascade towards their inevitable extinction due to anthropogenic pressures such as habitat loss by land encroachment for *Areca* cultivation along water courses, even inside protected areas. Hence

more studies on their distribution, population, and regeneration studies may throw light on mitigating the crisis and planning conservation measures.

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