

Two new additions to the family Urticaceae of Andaman & Nicobar Islands, India

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Abstract

Dendrocnide sinuata (Blume) Chew and *Laportea interrupta* (L.) Chew belonging to the family Urticaceae are reported as new additions to the flora of Andaman and Nicobar Islands. Descriptions, line drawing, and photographs are presented for easy identification.

Keywords: Andaman & Nicobar Islands, *Dendrocnide sinuata*, *Laportea interrupta*, Urticaceae, New Report.

Introduction

Urticaceae Juss., the nettle family, comprising about 48 genera and 1050 species of herbs, shrubs, small trees, and a few vines are distributed primarily in tropics to temperate regions of both new and old worlds (Mabberley, 2008). Five tribes have been recognized from the family (Wilmot-Dear, 2009) of which Elatostemeae (3 genera and 5 species) and Boehmerieae (6 genera and 9 species) are known to occur in Andaman and Nicobar Islands (Parkinson, 1923; Vasudeva Rao, 1986; Lakshminarasimhan & Rao, 1996; Mathew, 1998; Pandey & Diwakar, 2008).

During the floristic collection trips to Little Andaman and Havelock Islands, two interesting Urticaceae plants with stinging hairs have been collected by the author, which upon a critical study have been identified as *Dendrocnide sinuata* (Blume) Chew and *Laportea interrupta* (L.) Chew belonging to the tribe Urticeae. Hence, they are reported here as new additions to the flora of Andaman and Nicobar Islands. The collection of these two species from Little Andaman and Havelock Islands also forms two new generic records to the flora of Andaman and Nicobar Islands. Detailed descriptions, line drawing, photographs and relevant information of these plants are presented for easy identification.

Dendrocnide sinuata (Blume) Chew, Gard. Bull. Singapore 21: 206. 1965; Balakr., Fl. Jowai 2: 445. 1983; C.J. Saldanha, Fl. Karnataka 1: 125. 1984; Henry *et al.*, Fl. Tamil Nadu, Ser. I: Analysis 2: 244. 1987; Sivar. & P. Mathew, Fl. Nilambur 649. 1996. *Urtica sinuata* Blume, Bijdr. Fl. Ned. Ind. 10: 505. 1825. *U. crenulata* Roxb., Fl. Ind. 3: 591. 1832; Wight,

Icon. Pl. Ind. Orient. 2: t. 686. 1843. *Laportea crenulata* Gaudich., Voy. Bonite, Bot. 498. 1826; Kurz., Forest Fl. Burma 2: 421. 1877; Hook.f., Fl. Brit. India 5: 550. 1888.

Fig. 1

A small tree, to 5 m high; bark smooth, whitish; branchlets reddish-brown, flattened, striate with few raised lenticels, glabrous. Leaves simple, alternate, membranous, elliptic to rhombic, rarely ovate or obovate, 13–30 × 6–13 cm, acuminate at apex, truncate to subcordate at base, margin sinuate to dentate, pale green, papillate, glabrous

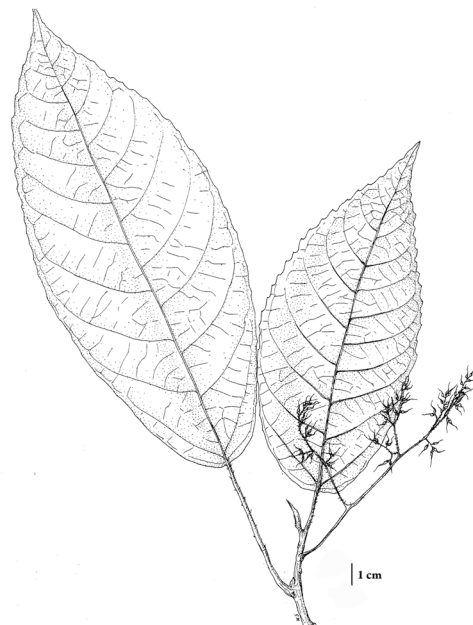


Fig. 1. *Dendrocnide sinuata* (Blume) Chew: Flowering twig.

on both sides; midrib prominently raised above, flat to prominent beneath; lateral nerves 10–12 pairs, prominent on both surfaces; tertiary nerves scalariform. Petioles up to 13 cm long, with stinging hairs pointing downwards. Inflorescence unisexual branched racemes with flowers in loose fascicles. Female inflorescence up to 30 cm long; peduncle up to 12 cm long, with stinging hairs. Female flowers very shortly pedicellate, pedicels c. 1 mm long with dense stinging hairs. Perianth broadly ovate, c. 1 mm long, stinging hairy. Ovary c. 1 mm long; stigma 2–3 mm long. Achenes asymmetrically pyriform, 3–4 mm in diam., warty; fruiting pedicel 2–3 mm long with stinging hairs.

Flowering & Fruiting: January – April.

Distribution: Throughout India, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Thailand and China.

Habitat & Ecology: Occasional in the inland semi-evergreen and evergreen forests from 10–100 m growing in association with *Ficus racemosa* L., *F. fistulosa* Reinw. ex Blume, *Neonauclea gageana* (King) Merr., *Terminalia procera* Roxb., *Drypetes longifolia* (Blume) Pax. & K. Hoffm., *D. assamica* (Hook.f.) Pax. & K. Hoffm., *Trivalvaria dubia* (Kurz) J. Sinclair, *Suregada multiflora* (A. Juss.) Baill., *Capparis floribunda* Lepr. ex Walp., *Mimusops elengi* L., *Knema andamanica* (Warb.) W.J. de Wilde, *Streblus asper* Lour. and *Horsfieldia irya* (Gaertn.) Warb.

Specimens examined: INDIA, **Andaman & Nicobar Islands**, Little Andaman Island, Hut Bay, 15.01.1977, *N.Bhargava* 5142; Quarry road, Hut Bay, 06.02.2006, *L. Rasingam* 20949 (PBL).

Laportea interrupta (L.) Chew, Gard. Bull. Singapore 21: 200. 1965 & 25: 145, t. 12. 1969; Nicolson & C.J. Saldanha, Fl. Hassan Dist. 89. 1976; Manilal & Sivar., Fl. Calicut 279. 1982; K.M. Mathew, Fl. Tamil Nadu Carnatic 3: 1491. 1983; C.J. Saldanha, Fl. Karnataka 1: 129. 1984; Henry *et al.*, Fl. Tamil Nadu Ind., Ser. I: Analysis. 2: 245. 1987; Sivar. & P. Mathew, Fl. Nilambur 652. 1996. *Urtica interrupta* L., Sp. Pl. 985. 1753; Roxb., Fl. Ind. 3: 585. 1832; Wight, Icon. Pl. Ind. Orient. 2: t. 692. 1843. *Fleurya interrupta* (L.) Gaudich., Voy. Bonite, Bot. 497, t. 8. 1826; Wight, Icon. Pl. Ind. Orient. t. 1975. 1853; Wedd., Monogr. Urtic. 115. 1856; Hook.f., Fl. Brit. India 5: 548. 1888; C.E.C. Fisch., Fl. Madras 3: 1372. 1928

Fig. 2

Small annual herb, c. 60 cm high. Stem woody at base with few branches, greenish-brown, deeply furrowed with stinging hairs towards apex. Leaves simple, alternate, ovate to broadly ovate, 4–7 ×



Fig. 2. *Laportea interrupta* (L.) Chew: **a.** Habit; **b.** Stinging hairs on the stem; **c.** Inflorescence.

2–4 cm, acute, obtuse or truncate at base, shortly acuminate at apex, coarsely serrate along margins, membranous, stinging hairs of the upper surface short, appressed, those of the lower surface mainly along midrib; lateral nerves 3–6 pairs, prominent, basal nerves reaching more than half the length of the lamina; petioles up to 7 cm long, densely covered with stinging hairs; stipules lanceolate, c. 3 mm long, bifid at apex. Inflorescence bisexual, paniculate, up to 15 cm long with flowers fasciculate at intervals along elongated peduncle consequent upon great reduction of lateral peduncular branches, axillary; peduncle up to 5 cm long, armed with stinging hairs. Male flowers few, c. 4 mm across, pedicellate. Tepals 4, ovate, concave, c. 1.5 mm long, pubescent without. Stamens 4; filaments c. 2 mm long. Female flowers c. 2.5 mm across. Tepals 4, unequal, basally connate into a cup. Ovary obliquely attached, ovoid, c. 2.5 mm long; stigma linear, trifid, reflex, the central one much longer than other two, c. 0.3 mm long. Achenes c. 1.2 mm in diam., asymmetrically ovoid, completely surrounded by a narrow membranous wing, on each lateral side a triangular ridge

enclosing a warty depression; fruiting pedicel c. 1 mm long, with stinging hairs.

Flowering & Fruiting: August–December.

Distribution: India, Africa, Sri Lanka, Japan throughout S. E. Asia to Pacific Islands.

Habitat & Ecology: Occasional along the footpaths and wastelands growing in association with *Glycosmis pentaphylla* (Retz.) DC., *Ipomoea pes-caprae* Roth, *Kyllinga brevifolia* Rottb., *Launea sarmentosa* (Willd.) Sch. Bip. ex Kuntze, *Mecardonia procumbens* (Mill.) Small, *Lindernia antipoda* (L.) Alston and *Linnophyla repens* Benth.

Specimen examined: INDIA, **South Andaman**, Havelock Island, way to Forest department guest house, 16.09.2007, L. Rasingam 25980 (PBL).

Acknowledgements

I am grateful to the Director, Botanical Survey of India, Kolkata for facilities; Officer In-Charge, Botanical Survey of India, Deccan Regional Centre, Hyderabad for encouragements; Mr. K. Sivananthan, Artist, Botanical Survey of India, Southern Regional Centre, Coimbatore for line drawing and the officials and field assistants of Andaman and Nicobar Forest Plantation & Development Corporation Ltd., Hut Bay for field support.

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Received: 17.05.2012

Revised and Accepted: 16.02.2013