

Anredera cordifolia (Basellaceae) – An addition to the non-indigenous flora of India

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Abstract

Anredera cordifolia (Ten.) Steenis belonging to the family Basellaceae is reported here as an addition to the non-indigenous flora of India from the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve, Tamil Nadu. A detailed description and photographs are provided.

Keywords: *Anredera cordifolia*, Basellaceae, India, New Record, Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve

Introduction

While preparing the pictorial field guide to the forest plants of Dhimbam Ghats (Sathyamangalam), one of us (LR) collected a climber with semi-succulent leaves and long white inflorescence at Asanur and later from Nehru Park, Kotagiri, Nilgiris. On critical examination with relevant literature, the plant was identified as *Anredera cordifolia* (Ten.) Steenis.

Anredera Juss. (Basellaceae), native to the tropical and subtropical Americas and Caribbean, comprises of 12 species (Eriksson, 2007). In India, so far only one species, viz., *A. baselloides* (Kunth) Baill. was known to occur (Santapau & Henry, 1973; T.K. Paul, pers. comm., 2011). *Anredera cordifolia*, commonly known as Heartleaf Madeira vine, Lamb's tail and Mignonette vine and is native to southern and central South America and cultivated as an ornamental in tropical and subtropical regions worldwide (Wagner *et al.*, 1999; Eriksson, 2007). This species is often naturalised and has also become an aggressive weed in southern Africa, Australia, Europe, southern North America, the Pacific Islands and New Zealand (Starr *et al.*, 2003). In India, it is known to occur in many hill stations of southern India but has not been reported in any of the earlier works (Kumari, 1987; Matthew, 1999; Reddy *et al.*, 2008). Hence, the species is reported here as an addition to the non-indigenous flora of India. A detailed description and photographs are provided for easy identification.

Anredera cordifolia (Ten.) Steenis, Fl. Males. 5: 303. 1957; R. Erikss., Kew Bull. 62: 311. 2007. *Boussingaultia cordifolia* Ten., Ann. Sci. Nat. Bot. Ser. 3, 19: 355. 1853. **Fig. 1**

Vine, evergreen. Stem semi-succulent, producing small axillary tubers (bulbils). Leaves simple, ovate to subcordate, 2 – 8 × 1 – 7 cm, rounded or cordate at base, acute at apex, thin-fleshy; petioles very short. Racemes axillary, pendent, simple or branched, many-flowered; rachis 7 – 25 cm long; each flower subtended by a persistent bract; lower bracteoles broadly triangular, acute at apex, hyaline, persistent; upper bracteoles orbicular to broadly elliptic, shorter than perianth, flattened, greenish white. Flowers c. 6 mm across, fragrant; pedicels 2 – 3 mm long. Perianth inflexed, patent in anthesis, white; segments 5, ovate or oblong to elliptic, c. 3 × 2 mm, blunt at apex. Stamens 5, opposite perianth segment, white; filaments apically reflexed in bud, spreading in anthesis. Styles white, split into 3 stigmatic arms, each with 1 club-shaped or broadly ellipsoid stigma. Fruits subtended at base by persistent, patent perianth.

Flowering & Fruiting: June – October.

Habitat: On forest edges, roadside fences and fallow lands between 1000 and 2000 m; very common.

Distribution: India (Tamil Nadu); America, Australia, China, Malaysia, Pacific Islands and South Africa.



Fig. 1. *Anredera cordifolia* (Ten.) Steenis: a. Habit; b. Inflorescence.

Specimens examined: INDIA, **Tamil Nadu**, Erode district, Asanur (Araepalayam), way towards Geddesal, 4.4.2009, L. Rasingam KFK-1; Nilgiris district, Kotagiri, Nehru Park, 30.7.2010, L. Rasingam KFK-2 (CAL).

Notes: The plant becomes a noxious weed in many countries and propagates vegetatively by means of bulbils. It climbs vigorously over trees and shrubs and affects terrestrial ecosystems by halting the regeneration and succession processes (Prior & Armstrong, 2001).

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