

Ficus variegata (Moraceae), a new record for Peninsular India

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Abstract

Ficus variegata Blume, earlier known only from northeast India and Andaman Islands, is recorded for the first time from Peninsular India. A detailed description, illustration and photographs are provided.

Keywords: *Ficus*, New Record, Peninsular India

Introduction

Ficus L. is one of the largest genera in the angiosperms with c. 735 species distributed in pantropical and extending to subtropical regions of the world (Berg & Corner, 2005). Roxburgh (1832) reported 55 species in Flora Indica. The first systematic account on Indian *Ficus* was presented by King (1888) in Hooker's The Flora of British India. He has recorded 112 species and 47 infraspecific taxa, of which only 75 species and 16 infraspecific taxa are known from the present political boundaries of India. The present revisionary study on Indian *Ficus* shows that there are c. 90 species and 24 infraspecific taxa in India, of which 46 species and 8 infraspecific taxa are found in the peninsular region. In India, the maximum diversity of species lies in the northeast region followed by peninsular region and Andaman & Nicobar Islands.

During the exploration tour in the Eastern Ghats of Andhra Pradesh, the first author collected specimens of a *Ficus* species from East Godavari and Visakhapatnam districts. On critical examination and perusal of literature (Corner, 1965; Berg & Corner, 2005), it was identified as *F. variegata* Blume, hitherto known from northeast India and Andaman Islands. Therefore, the present collection is a new distributional record for Peninsular India. A detailed description, illustration and photographs are provided for easy identification.

Ficus variegata Blume, Bijdr. 9: 459. 1825; Miq., Ann. Mus. Bot. Lugduno-Batavum 3: 295. 1867; King, Ann. Roy. Bot. Gard., Calcutta 2: 169, t. 212, 213. 1888 & in Hook.f., Fl. Brit. India 5: 535. 1888; Prain, Bengal Pl. 2: 903. 1903; Brandis, Indian Trees:

609. 1906; C.E. Parkinson, Forest Fl. Andaman Isl.: 249. 1923; Corner, Gard. Bull. Singapore 21(1): 82. 1965; N.P. Balakr., Fl. Jowai 2: 438. 1983; I.C. Barua & B. Neogi, J. Econ. Taxon. Bot. 19: 275. 1995; C.C. Berg & Corner, Fl. Males. 17(2): 347. 2005. **Fig. 1, 2**

Trees, up to 30 m tall, deciduous; trunk buttressed, straight; branches numerous on top, spreading in all directions; aerial roots absent; branchlets glabrous, pubescent or glabrous when young; bark smooth, pale brown with reddish spots. Leaves simple, alternate, symmetric, broadly ovate to ovate-elliptic, sometimes cordate, 10 – 30 × 2.5 – 11 cm, rounded or cordate to subcordate at base, entire, subrepand or coarsely denticulate at margins, acuminate to subacute at apex with c. 1 cm long acumen, coriaceous with cystoliths only on lower surface, glabrous, puberulous below when young, brown with ash colour patches above, dark brown below when dry; basal nerves 3 – 5 (2 inconspicuous), waxy glands at slit-shaped extensions of axils of main basal nerves; midrib prominent below; lateral nerves 3 – 5(– 8) pairs, prominent below, looping intramarginally; tertiary nerves transverse, minutely reticulate; petioles stout, 2.5 – 6.5 × to 0.25 cm, grooved above, glabrous or appressed-puberulous, brown with flaking off epidermis; stipules terminal, ovate-lanceolate, 0.5 – 2 cm long, caducous, glabrous or puberulous. Receptacles in fascicles from woody tubercles, ramiflorous to cauliflorous, dioecious, drooping, long-pedunculate, globose or subglobose to pyriform, 2 – 3.5 cm across, smooth, glabrous, yellowish green, pink to red with white streaks and spots when ripe, sometimes with a short stipe (up to 8

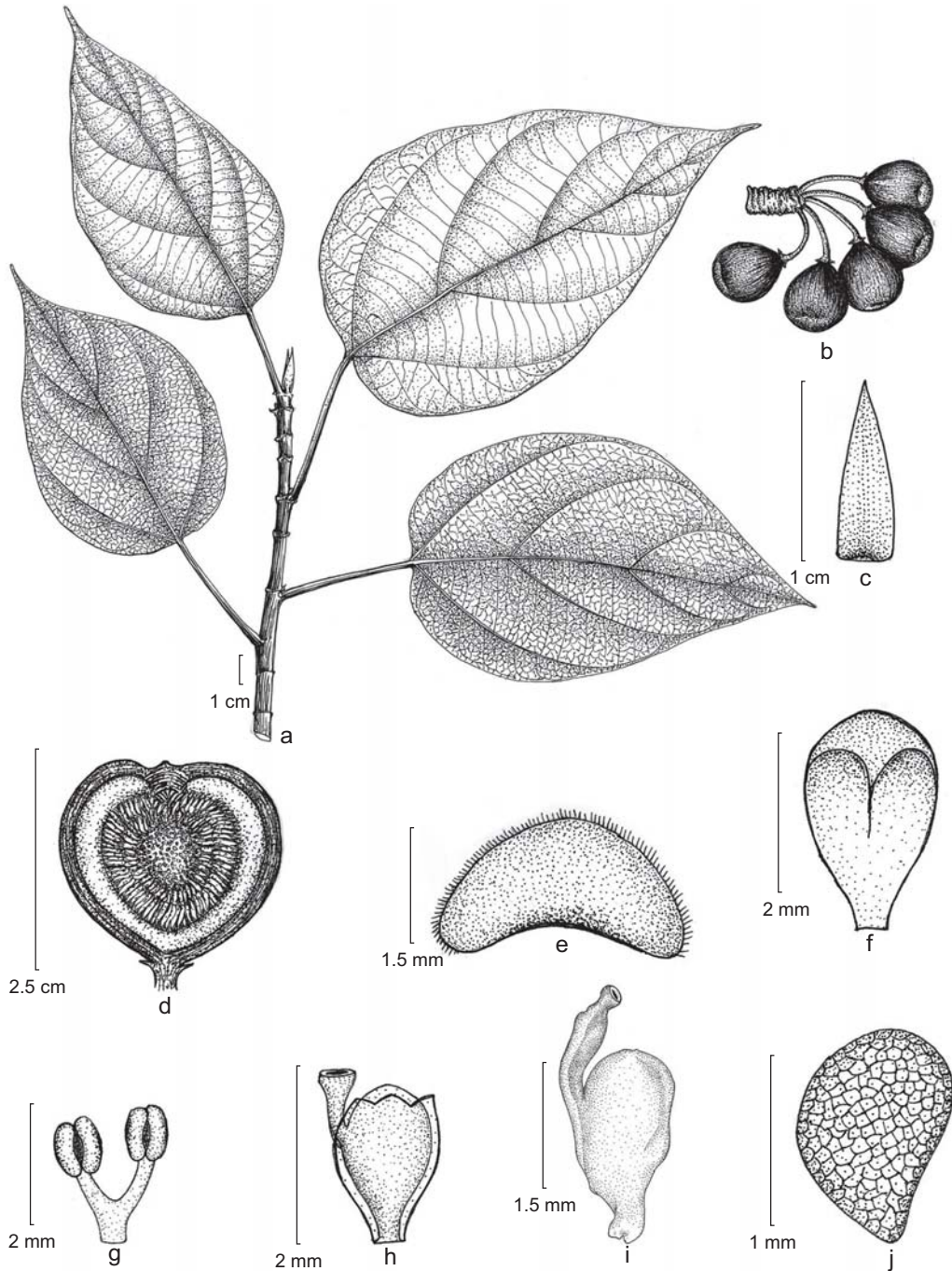


Fig. 1. *Ficus variegata* Blume: a. Habit; b. Receptacles; c. Stipule; d. L.S. of Receptacle; e. Ostiolar bract; f. Male flower; g. Stamens; h. Gall flower; i. Female flower; j. Achene.

mm); fig wall up to 6 mm thick; peduncles moderately stout, $2 - 5 \times 0.1 - 0.2$ mm, glabrous; basal bracts 3, basally connate, ovate-acute, 1.5 - 2.5 mm long, deciduous or persistent, leaving annular scar, pubescent; ostiole slightly depressed, 4 - 5 mm across, 1.5 - 2 mm depth; ostiolar bracts 3 - 5, free, ovate-acute or ovate-obtuse, 1 - 2 mm long, pubes-

cent; internal bristles obtuse, 1 - 1.5 mm long, glabrous, hairy at margin; interfloral bracts usually absent. Male flowers: Sessile, found near ostiole, 2 - 2.5 mm long; perianth more or less polyphylous; tepals 3 or 4, linear-lanceolate or spatulate, 1.5 - 2 mm long; stamens 2; anthers broadly ovoid; filaments short. Gall flowers: Sessile or shortly

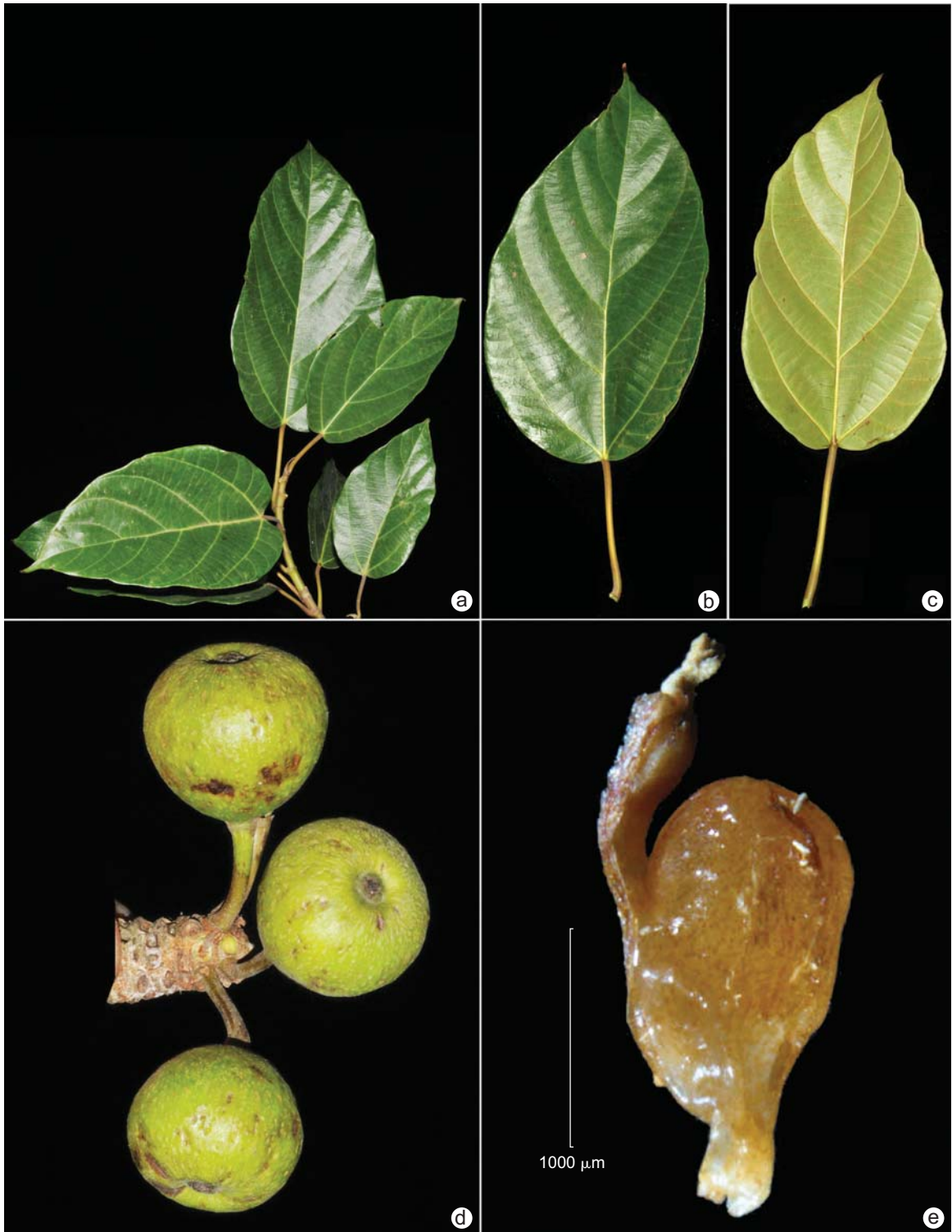


Fig. 2. *Ficus variegata* Blume: a. Habit; b. Leaf adaxial surface; c. Leaf abaxial surface; d. Receptacles; e. Female flower.

pedicellate, 2 – 3 mm long; pedicels 0.6 – 0.8 mm long; perianth gamophyllous; tubular, 4 or 5-lobed, 1.5 – 2.5 mm long, inflated at apex; ovary ovoid,

1 – 1.2 mm long, red-brown to pale; style lateral, 0.5 – 0.8 mm long, white; stigma infundibuliform. Female flowers: Sessile or shortly pedicellate,

2.5 – 3 mm long; pedicels 0.7 – 1 mm long; perianth gamophyllous or basally connate; tepals 3 or 4, lanceolate or spatulate, *c.* 2 mm long, inflated at apex, reddish or brownish; ovary ovoid, 1 – 1.3 mm, reddish or pale brown; style lateral, cylindrical, 1.3 – 1.5 mm long, thick, white; stigma infundibuliform. Achenes ovoid or obovoid, 1 – 1.5 mm long, minutely tuberculate.

Flowering & Fruiting: January – September.

Habitat: Dry deciduous and semi-evergreen forests, to 700 m.

Distribution: India: Andaman Islands, Andhra Pradesh, Assam and Meghalaya. World: Australia, Bangladesh, China, Indochina, Japan, Malesia, Myanmar, Ryuku Islands, Solomon Islands, Thailand and Taiwan.

Specimens examined: INDIA, **Andhra Pradesh**, East Godavari district, on the way Valamuru to Tiger Camp, near Maredumilli, 700 m, 28.9.2011, *J.V. Sudhakar* 126741, 126743; Maredumilli to Valamuru way, 500 m, 28.9.2011, *J.V. Sudhakar* 126742; Visakhapatnam district, Gudem to Sapparla way, near Sileru, 700 m, 5.10.2011, *J.V. Sudhakar* 126769 (MH).

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