

Trichosanthes quinquangulata (Cucurbitaceae) – A new record for India from Andaman Islands

L. Rasingam

Deccan Regional Centre, Botanical Survey of India, Hyderabad – 500 048, Andhra Pradesh, India.

E-mail: rasingam@gmail.com

Abstract

Trichosanthes quinquangulata A. Gray (Cucurbitaceae) is reported first time for India from Andaman Islands. A detailed description and photographs are provided for identification.

Keywords: Andaman Islands, Cucurbitaceae, India, New Record, *Trichosanthes quinquangulata*

Introduction

Trichosanthes L. is one of the largest genera of the family Cucurbitaceae with c. 100 species distributed in India, China, Taiwan, Japan, southeast Asia, New Guinea and northeast Australia (Schaefer & Renner, 2011). In India, the genus is represented by 22 species (Chakravarty, 1982), of which four species, viz., *T. cucumerina* L., *T. dioica* Roxb., *T. ovigera* Blume and *T. tricuspidata* Lour. have been recorded from Andaman and Nicobar Islands (Rao, 1986; Lakshminarasimhan & Rao, 1996; Mathew, 1998; Pandey & Diwakar, 2008). While working on the flora of Little Andaman Island the author came across few *Trichosanthes* specimens annotated as *T. tricuspidata* Lour. at PBL. On scrutiny, the specimens were identified as *T. quinquangulata* A. Gray, earlier known from north Vietnam, Taiwan, Malay Peninsula, Sumatra, Java, Borneo and Philippines and not reported from India (Chakravarty, 1959, 1982; Jeffrey, 1980). Hence, it is reported here for the first time from India. A detailed description and photographs are provided.

Trichosanthes quinquangulata A. Gray, U.S. Expl. Exped., Phan. 1: 645. 1854; Cogn. in A. DC. & C. DC., Monogr. Phan. 3: 378. 1881; Craib, Fl. Siam. 1: 753. 1931; C.H. Yueh & C.Y. Cheng, Acta Phytotax. Sin. 12: 443. 1974; C. Jeffrey, Cucurbitac. East. Asia: 41. 1980; Rugayah & W.J. de Wilde, Blumea 42: 479, t. 1a. 1997; Rugayah, Berita Biol. 5: 681. 2001; Duyfjes & Pruesapan, Thai Forest Bull., Bot. 32: 96. 2004.

Fig. 1

Climber. Stem finely channeled, glabrous, blackish brown. Leaves simple, broadly ovate to suborbicular, 8–17 × 6–15 cm, deeply cordate at base, thin-

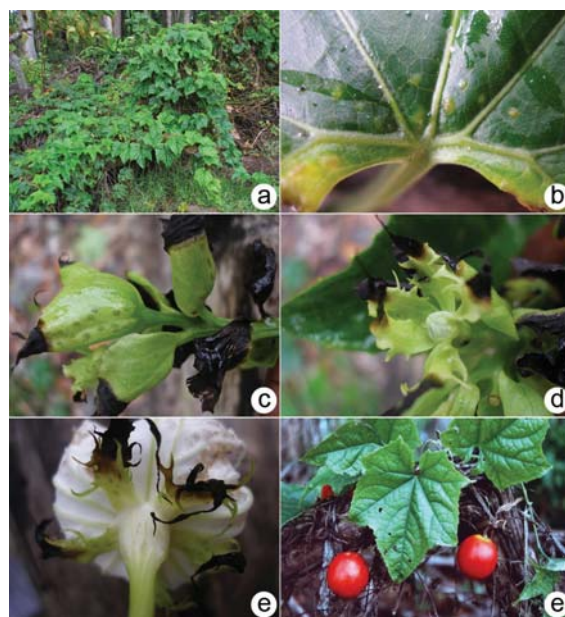


Fig. 1. *Trichosanthes quinquangulata* A. Gray: a. Habit; b. Leaf base with numerous glands; c. Bracts with circular glands; d. Fimbriate calyx of male flower; e. Calyx and corolla of male flower; f. Fruits.

coriaceous, shallowly to deeply 5(–7)-palmately lobed; lobes broadly ovate, subentire to remotely dentate at margins, acuminate to caudate-acuminate at apex, verrucose, glabrous, rarely scabrid on nerves above, blackish brown above on dry, glabrous, greenish brown below on dry; main nerves 5(–7) pairs, prominent; tertiary nerves prominent; glands numerous, scattered and mostly confined

to base of nerve axils; petioles 3 – 7 cm long, channeled, glabrous to minutely scabrid; tendrils 2 – 5-branched. Male inflorescences axillary, racemose, up to 15 cm long; rachis up to 9 cm long, finely channeled, glabrous. Flowers white; bracts broadly ovate, c. 2 × 1 cm, attenuate at ends, entire at margins, glabrous with few circular glands. Calyx 5-lobed; lobes lanceolate, c. 1.4 cm long, entire to lacinate at margins; tube up to 3 cm long. Fruits globose, up to 5 cm, smooth, glabrous, green when young, brilliant red on ripening; dry pericarp thick, brownish yellow; seeds oblong, c. 10 × 5 mm, compressed, surrounded by green-black pulp.

Flowering & Fruiting: November – March.

Habitat & Ecology: This species is commonly found in littoral and deciduous forests from sea level to 50 m, in association with *Scaevola taccada*, *Manilkara littoralis*, *Barringtonia asiatica*, *Cordia dichotoma*, *Thespesia populnea*, *Dodonaea viscosa*, *Sophora tomentosa*, *Tournefortia argentea*, *Dendrolobium umbellatum*, *Ardisia oxyphylla*, *Clerodendrum inerme*, *Allophylus cobbe* and *Crinum asiaticum*.

Distribution: India (Andaman Islands), Indonesia (Borneo, Java, New Guinea, Sumatra), Malay Peninsula (Malaysia, Myanmar, Thailand), Philippines, Taiwan and Vietnam.

Specimens examined: INDIA, **Andaman Islands**, North Andaman Islands, Aerial Bay, 20 m, 21.11.1976, *N.G. Nair* 4859; Middle Andaman Islands, Austin II, 20 m, 1.2.1959, *K. Thothathri* 9152; South Andaman Islands, Shaitanghadi, 50 m, 8.3.1976, *N.P. Balakrishnan & N.G. Nair* 3590; Havelock Island, 29.8.1977, *R.K. Premanath* 5966; Little Andaman Island, way to forest nursery, 10 m, 1.1.1976, *N. Bhargava* 3283; Way towards forest nursery, 21.11.1977, *N. Bhargava* 6538; Dugong creek, 27.11.1977, *N. Bhargava* 6587; Dugong creek, 1.2.1981, *R.K. Premanath* 8366; on the way to South Bay, 15.8.2004, *L. Rasingam* 17583 (PBL).

Note: *Trichosanthes quinquangulata* differs from *T. tricuspidata* by having 5 – 7-lobed leaves with numerous glands on leaf base, entire bracts with numerous circular glands, fimbriate calyx and globose fruits.

Uses: In Philippines the seed fried oil is applied externally to calm itchiness. The seed powder is mixed with wine to make a drink and used to assuage stomach-aches (Wiar, 2006).

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