



On the occurrence of *Ipomoea tenuipes* (Convolvulaceae) in India

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Abstract

Ipomoea tenuipes Verdc., an African species is recollected after a long gap from Maharashtra and the present collection confirms its existence in India. Brief description and relevant notes are provided here for easy identification.

Keywords: Convolvulaceae, India, *Ipomoea tenuipes*

Introduction

Ipomoea L. is one of the dominant genera in the family Convolvulaceae. The genus is represented by about 650 species, mainly confined to the tropical and warm temperate regions of the world (Mabberley, 2008). Santapau and Henry (1973) reported c. 60 species for India. Subsequently *Ipomoea mombassana* Vatke (Biju *et al.*, 1998); *I. parasitica* (Kunth) G. Don (Biju, 2002) and *I. ochracea* (Lindl.) G. Don (Shimpale *et al.*, 2012) have been added to Indian flora, bringing the total number into 63 species in India.

While exploring the family Convolvulaceae for the state of Maharashtra, the authors came across an interesting species of *Ipomoea* from Paithan in Aurangabad district, Maharashtra. The species resembles with *I. cairica* (L.) Sweet but differs in having annual habit and smaller corolla with apiculate lobes. After detailed studies and consulting types and relevant literature, it is identified as *I. tenuipes* Verdc. It is a native of Africa and recollected after a gap of 53 years from Indian region. This species is not reported by Hooker, (1882), Cooke (1958), Johari (1983), Biju (1997), Naik (1998) Almeida (2001) and Singh *et al.* (2001). But Verdcourt (1961) has commented that 'the plant does occur in India but needs confirmation in by comparison with African material'. Hence the present report of its occurrence in Maharashtra is the confirmation of its existence in the Indian flora. Brief description and relevant notes are provided here to facilitate easy identification.

***Ipomoea tenuipes* Verdc.**, Kew Bull. 15: 12. 1961 & in Fl. Tropical East Africa (Convolvulaceae): 127. 1963. **Fig. 1**

Convolvulus heptaphyllus Rottl. & Willd. in Ges., Naturf. Fr. Neue Schr. 4: 196. 1803.

Annual, glabrous herbs. Stems slender, twining or sometimes prostrate. Lamina circular in outline, palmately divided to the base, 9.2 × 8.2 cm, often much less; lobes elliptic to lanceolate 2.6–4 × 1 cm, usually obtuse and apiculate at apex, narrowed and sub-petioluled at base, the outer ones often 2-lobed; petiole 4–5 cm long, glabrous; pseudostipules present resembling the leaves but much smaller, glabrous. Flowers axillary, solitary or in 2–3-flowered cymes; peduncle 5–6 cm long, slender, almost filiform, glabrous; pedicels slender but thicker than the peduncle, more or less 1.7 cm long, somewhat sub-clavate; bracteoles minute, middle of the pedicel. Sepals elliptic or almost orbicular, 3–4 × 3–5 mm, sub-equal with membranous edges, usually obtuse but mucronulate, often muriculate. Corolla funnel-shaped, rose-purple or dark mauve, 0.8–1.7 × 0.4–1.5 cm, with shallow apiculate lobes. Stamens 5, sub-equal, included, adnate to corolla lobe at c. 5 mm above base. Capsules globose, 6–7 × 7–8 mm, 4-valved, glabrous, brown. Seeds 2–4, sub-globose, 3–4 × 2–2.5 mm, brown, velvety-pubescent, with 5–10 mm long white cottony hairs at the edges.

Flowering & Fruiting: October – December.



Fig. 1. *Ipomoea tenuipes* Verdc.: **a.** Habit; **b.** Single flower; **c.** Corolla split open showing stamens; **d.** Fruit.

Habitat & Ecology: Grows along road sides, usually in black cottony or loamy soil. It mostly twines on bushes of *Prosopis juliflora* DC.

Distribution: Botswana, Mozambique, Zambia, Zimbabwe and now in India.

Specimen examined: INDIA, Maharashtra, Aurangabad, Paithan, Kare 1035.

Note: It is often confused with *I. cairica*, the important differences are tabulated in Table 1.

Table 1. Differences between *Ipomoea cairica* and *Ipomoea tenuipes*

Characters	<i>Ipomoea cairica</i>	<i>Ipomoea tenuipes</i>
Habit	Perennial herb	Annual herb
Lamina	Ovate or orbicular	Circular in outline
Peduncle	1.5–2 cm long	5–6 cm long
Corolla	4–6 × 1–5 cm, without apiculate lobes	0.8–1.7 × 0.4–1.5 cm, with shallow apiculate lobes

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