NEW RECORDS OF ASTERACEAE FROM WEST BENGAL

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ABSTRACT

The present work elucidates eleven taxa belonging to ten species of Asteraceae as new records for the state of West Bengal.

INTRODUCTION

The family Asteraceae constitutes the largest family of vascular plants with c. 30,000 species and over 1100 genera in the world. Most of the members of this family are well adapted to survive in varied ecological conditions. In India the family is represented by c. 900 species under 167 genera and 240 species under 105 genera are reported from West Bengal. While scrutinizing the specimens housed in CAL, some interesting specimens were encountered, which were not reported earlier from West Bengal. These were critically examined and correctly identified. Literature perusal evidenced thirteen such taxa from different districts of West Bengal which were new to the state, two of which have been reported earlier (Garg, 2006). Eleven taxa belonging to ten species are now described and reported here for the first time from the state of West Bengal.

The species have been listed alphabetically, complete nomenclatural citations, synonyms, brief description, flowering and fruiting time, distribution, ecology, habitat, uses, status, local names, specimens examined, with notes and infraspecific identification keys are provided to facilitate easy identification.


Herbs; stems often rooting at nodes. Leaves rhombic-parabolic in shape, petiolate. Heads corymbose. Involucral bracts sub 2-seriate. Corollas white or pink. Achenes lightly muricate. Pappus hairs 4-5, ending in a knob.

Fl. & Fr.: October - January.

Distribution: Maharashtra, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal.

Specimen examined: India: West Bengal, Jalpaiguri district. BD 6, Kodalbusti, 6.12.95, S. Chandra & S.K. Mondal 1042 (CAL).


Fl. & Fr.: October.

Distribution: Eastern Himalayas, 3400-4000 m, Sikkim and West Bengal.

Date of Publication: 15 September, 2009
**Status**: Rare.

**Specimen examined**: India: West Bengal, Darjeeling; Sandakphu, 8.10.41, 4100 m, Dr. K. Biswas 5740 (CAL).


**Fl. & Fr.**: April - December. January - March.

**Local name**: Budawurd (Hindi), Sukaji (Marathi).

**Distribution**: Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal.

**Habitat**: On dry stony ground and sandy river banks, up to 1000 m.

**Uses**: The plant is used as a tonic, aperient, deobstruent, febrifuge, slightly mucilaginous and used in coughs.

**Specimen examined**: India: West Bengal, Purulia district. Kalma, 6.3.1964, S.N. Biswas 108 (CAL).


**Fl. & Fr.**: March - June.

**Distribution**: Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal.

**Habitat**: often met with as an escape in waste places and roadsides. Usually cultivated.

**Specimens examined**: India: West Bengal, Bankura, 28.12.66, M.N. Sanyal 919 (CAL); around Burdwan, 20 May-65, A.K.Dutt 796 (CAL).


**Fl. & Fr.**: July - October.

**Distribution**: Delhi, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Karnataka and West Bengal.

**Specimens examined**: India: West Bengal, Birbhum, Sriniketan, 26.2.1986, M.C.Biswas 19601 (CAL); Herb. Sulp. Kurz – Cult in Horto Botanico Calcuttensis, s.n., (Acc. No. 241557, CAL); 8.3.89, Cult. in H. B. R. Calcuttensis, s.l. s.n. (Acc. No. 241558, CAL).

**Notes**: The species is native of Central America; now naturalized in West Bengal.


**Fl. & Fr.**: December - March.
Distribution: South India and West Bengal. The pattern of distribution indicates a disjunct distribution of the species.

Specimens examined: India: West Bengal, Cooch Behar district, Purba Guhati, 3.3.84, B.C. Banerjee 15250 (CAL); Purba Ghugumari, 4.3.1984, B. C. Banerjee 15276 (CAL); Paschim Ghugumari, 4.3.1984, B. C. Banerjee 15273 (CAL).

Notes: The Old-World tropical genus Gynura Cas. (Davies, 1978-81), is characterized by the presence of subulate style-arm appendages and druses in the ovary wall. It is closely related to Kleinia Mill., often scendent species, at present distributed between Senecio and Crassocephalum (Jeffrey & Yi-ling, 1984).


Notes: There are two sheets in CAL, bearing the same collection number. The specimens on the two sheets belong to the two different varieties of *Helichrysum* now designated separately as A and B.

Key to Varieties

1a. Stems brownish; involucral bracts charred brown-sulphur yellow; pappus hairs yellow

... var. *bracteatum*

1b. Stems greenish; involucral bracts white; pappus hairs white

... var. *albidum*

1a. var. *bracteatum*

*Fl. & Fr.:* May – December; June – February.

Distribution: Up to 2100 m. Tamil Nadu and West Bengal.

Specimen examined: India: West Bengal, Darjeeling, Kalimpong, 2.6.59, 1167m, Dr. S.K. Mukerjee 5099 B (CAL).


*Fl. & Fr.:* May – December; June – February.

Distribution: Nilgiri hills, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal. Cultivated in most of the hill stations.

Uses: The yellow, shining papery bracts are quite attractive.

Specimen examined: India: West Bengal, Darjeeling, Kalimpong, 2.6.59, 1167 m, Dr. S.K. Mukerjee 5099 A (CAL).

Notes: It is a well known hardy ornamental annual popularly known as “Everlasting straw flower”


*Fl. & Fr.:* August – October.

Distribution: Eastern Himalaya, Sikkim and West Bengal.
Specimens examined: India: West Bengal, Darjeeling: Phaloot, 4000 m, 15.9.84, G. Kings collector 188 (CAL); Singalelah: 3900 m, 7 Oct. 1870, s.l. 12543 D (CAL); Singalelah, 3900 m, 7 Oct. 1870, s.l. 12543 E (CAL); Singalelah, 3900 m, 7 Oct. 1870, s.l. 12543 F (CAL).


Fl. & Fr.: September – November.

Habitat: Naturalized in Himalayan and sub Himalayan regions, waste places and roadsides, rocky hill slopes, cultivated fields.


Specimen examined: India: Darjeeling, 26.11.1926, J. Bhattacharya & party 24352 (CAL).


Fl. & Fr.: September – March.

Local name: “Mas-Koita” (Asm.); “Somkhari-Phang” (Kach.); “Pachet” (Naga).

Distribution: Assam, Nagaland, Manipur, Meghalaya, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Andamans and West Bengal.

Uses: Bark chewed by Nagas as “PAN” (Kanjilal, 1939).

Specimen examined: India: West Bengal, Darjeeling district: Mahananda Wild Life Sanctuary, S. Chandra & party 21537 (CAL).

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REFERENCES


