MASTIXIA EUONYMOIDES PRAIN (CORNACEAE) : AN ADDITION TO THE FLORA OF TAMIL NADU
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The genus Mastixia Blume (Cornaceae) with 13 species is distributed in Sri Lanka (Ceylon), India, Bhutan, S. Yunnan, Myanmar (Burma), Thailand, Indo-China, Malesia and Solomon Islands. In India, four taxa, viz. M. arborea (Wight) Bedd. ssp. arborea, M. arborea (Wight) Bedd. ssp. meziana (Wangerin.) K.M. Matthew, M. euonymoides Prain and M. pentandra Blume ssp. chinensis (Merr.) K.M. Mathew are distributed (K.M. Matthew, 1976). While studying the genus Mastixia Blume (Cornaceae) of South India, the authors found an unidentified specimen from Nilgiri hills, Tamil Nadu. After critical studies and perusal of literature, we confirmed it as Mastixia euonymoides Prain. So far, it is known to N.E. India (Manipur), Bhutan, Myanmar and Thailand (Brandis, 1907 & K.M. Matthew, 1976). The present collection constitutes a new distributional record for the Western Ghats, Peninsular India. A short description with a photograph of the specimen is provided in this paper.


Tree, to 15 m high, branchlets stout, decussate, 4-angular. Leaves decussate; ovate-lanceolate, cuneate at base, sub-entire at margins, acuminate at apex, coriaceous, domatiate beneath, 10-15 x 5-7 cm; lateral nerves (5-)8-10 pairs, distinct on both surfaces. Inflorescence terminal, to (8-)10 cm long, stout; branches 4-angular. Calyx subtruncate, thick; teeth 4, rounded, minute. Incipient fruits elliptic, up to 7 mm long, reddish brown, with persistent disc and inconspicuous calyx.

Fr.: May.

Distribution: India: Manipur and Tamil Nadu; Bhutan; Myanmar (Burma) and Thailand.

Habitat : In the evergreen forests at 850 m altitude.

Specimen examined: India: Tamil Nadu, Nilgiri district, Nadugani, 850 m, 24 May 1971, J.L. Ellis 38520 (MH).

Note: This species is closely allied to Mastixia octandra K.M. Matthew of Sumatra, but differs in 4-angular branchlets and inflorescence branches, coriaceous leaves and thick calyx with rounded teeth.

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