Note on a little known endemic legume
_Crotalaria lutescens_ from Western Ghats, India

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ABSTRACT

The paper deals with the extended distribution of _Crotalaria lutescens_ Dalzell (Leguminosae – Papilionoideae) a endemic legume of Western Ghats in Karnataka.

INTRODUCTION

During the floristic survey in Sharavathi Valley Wild Life Sanctuary in Shimoga district of Karnataka an uncommon herbaceous legume was collected from the open grassy areas of low altitude hill slopes. The species was later identified as _Crotalaria lutescens_ Dalzell, a rare endemic species of Western Ghats (Ansari 2008 & Singh & al., 2015). A thorough scrutiny of literature and examination of herbarium specimens deposited in BSI, MH and CAL revealed that this is a sporadically collected species. This could be due to the rare distribution of this plant or overlooked by plant collectors for some common _Crotalaria_ species. Since 1843 to till date this species was recorded only 15 times over the period of 172 years. The chronology of the previous collection reveals that, the species was collected from Ramanguli of Karwar District by (Herb.) J. Sedgewick & T.R.D. Bell during 1919; subsequentlly Sindhudurg district of Maharashtra (1970), Anshi National Park in Uttara Kannada district (2001) and Molem National Park in Goa (2003) respectively. Hence, the present record of this endemic species from Shimoga district is after more than a decade forms an additional locality of its distribution in the Western Ghats of Karnataka state. Field observations during the study shows that, the species is located on one place with sporadic population. Account of the species is presented in this paper with photographs and distribution map for easy recognition in field.

Keywords: _Crotalaria_, Endemic, Western Ghats, Additional locality, Shimoga.
**TAXONOMIC TREATMENT**


*(Plate 1.)*

*Lectotype*: India, Maharashtra, Bombay, *Dalzell* s. n. (K - Cibachrome, Photo 96).

Erect herbs, up to 60 cm high; stems branched, branches terete or angled; internodes 2–4.7 cm long,
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estipulate. Leaves subsessile, linear, linear-lanceolate or elliptic-lanceolate, 3.5–8 × 0.5–1.5 cm, glabrous above, paler beneath (young leaves minutely hairy). Flowers in lax terminal racemes; pedicels up to 1.5 cm long, slender, glabrous. Calyx 5-lobed; lobes linear, 1–1.3 × 0.1–0.2 cm, glabrous. Corolla yellow, exserted; vexillum ovate-cordate or ovate-oblong, 1.5–2.5 × 2 cm, acute, conspicuously red-veined, hairy on back at tip; wing petals pale yellow, ovate; keel petals ovate, with a hairy line on the back, beak long, straight and twisted, pale green and red-veined at apex. Pods stalked, oblong, 3–3.8 × c 1 cm, glabrous, brown-black, with persistent style. Seeds many, reniform, curved at apex.


Habitat: In low hills amongst grasses found growing in association with Themeda quadrivalvis, Hemidesmus indicus, Fimbristylis eragrostis and Canscora diffusa.

Distribution: Endemic to Western Ghats of India. GOA (South Goa), KARNATAKA (Uttara Kannada, Dakshina Kannada, Udupi, Shimoga) and MAHARASHTRA (Ahmednagar, Kolhapur, Nagpur, Sindhudurg).


Note: This species can be easily recognized in field by its simple, linear – lanceolate leaves, lax racemes and flowers with distinctly red-nerved corolla.

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