

**OROPHEA MALABARICA (ANNONACEAE), A NEW SPECIES  
FROM PENINSULAR INDIA**

N. SASIDHARAN<sup>1</sup> & V. V. SIVARAJAN<sup>2</sup>

SUMMARY

A new species of *Orophea* Blume (Annonaceae) is described from Western Ghats of India.

INTRODUCTION

The genus *Orophea* Blume, mainly centred in the Indo-Malesian region, has recently been revised by Keßler (1988). 37 species have been recognised in this taxon which fall under two subgenera: subg. *Orophea* (25 species) and subg. *Sphaerocarpon* Keßler (12 species), distinguished mainly on the basis of hirsute or glabrous carpels and elongate or globose fruitlets.

The genus has been reported to have four species in peninsular India (Keßler, 1988). During our studies on the Annonaceae of Western Ghats along the Malabar coast of India, we collected interesting material from Vengappara near Peechi in Central Kerala. The plant with its glabrous carpels obviously belongs to subg. *Sphaerocarpon*, which has 3 species in India, viz. *O. zeylanica* Hook. f. & Thomson, *O. uniflora* Hook. f. & Thomson, and *O. thomsonii* Beddome, but differs from all these in its 3-carpellary gynoecium. On closer examination, it also turned out to be different in several respects from the other two, 3-carpellary species of the subgenus, *O. hirsuta* King and *O. multiflora* Ast ex Jovet-Ast, both from Indo-China, Malay Peninsula, and S China. So the material is described here as a new species and is named after Malabar, from where it has been collected.

***Orophea malabarica* Sasidharan & Sivarajan, spec. nov. – Fig. 1.**

A speciebus aliis indicis *Orophea* subg. *Sphaerocarpon* (*O. thomsonii* Beddome et *O. zeylanica* Hook. f. & Thomson et *O. uniflora* Hook. f. & Thomson) ob pistillo 3-carpellorum facile diagnosenda; a speciebus affini *O. hirsuta* King ob foliis glabris et inflorescentiis 2- vel 3-floribus et nectariis duabus oblongis in petalis interioribus differt; a *O. multiflora* Jovet-Ast ob numero staminum et sculptura nectariorum differt. — T y p u s: *Sasidharan 4833* (holo L; iso CALI, KFRI), India, Kerala State, Trichur, Vengappara, 11-3-1988.

From the other Indian species of subg. *Sphaerocarpon* (*O. thomsonii* Beddome, *O. zeylanica* Hook. f. & Thomson and *O. uniflora* Hook. f. & Thomson) this spe-

1) Botany Division, Kerala Forest Research Institute, Peechi, Trichur 680 653, Kerala, India.

2) Department of Botany, University of Calicut, 673 635, Kerala, India.

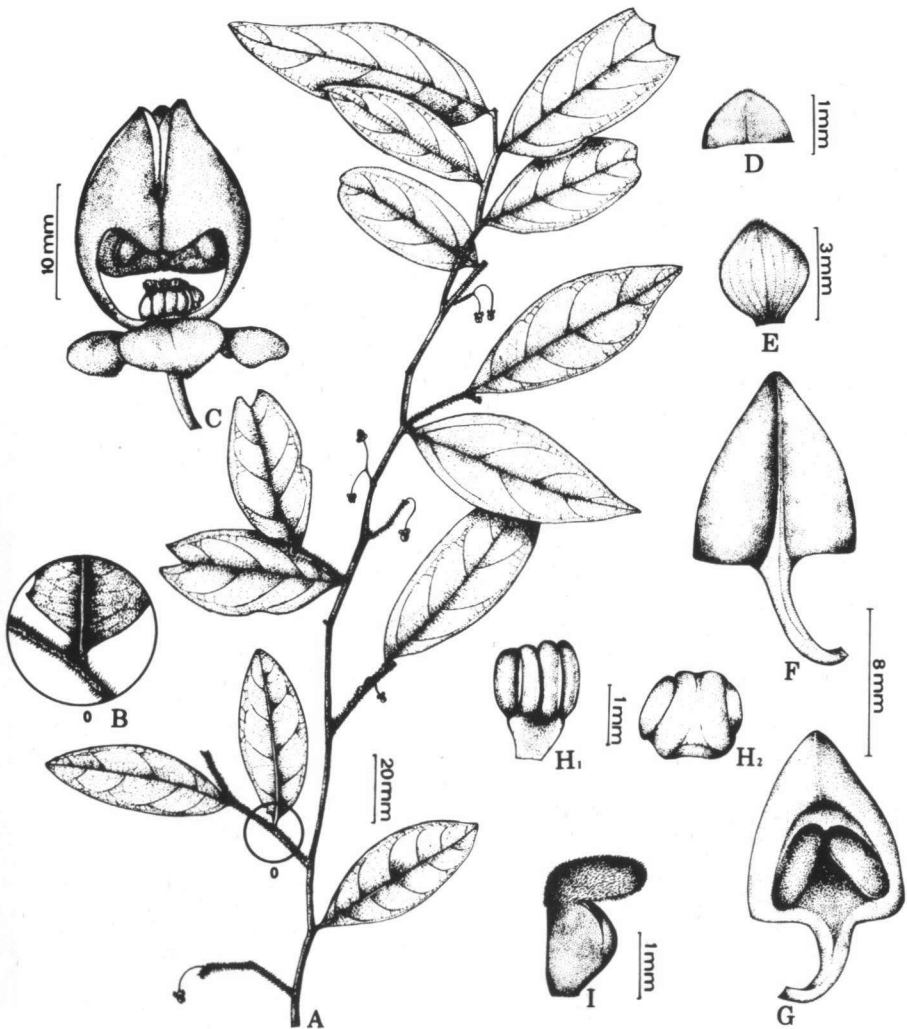


Fig. 1. *Orophea malabarica* Sasidharan & Sivaranjan. A. Flowering twig; B. part of young shoot showing indumentum; C. single flower; D. sepal; E. outer petal; F. inner petal (dorsal view); G. inner petal (inside view) showing nectaries; H. stamen; H<sub>1</sub>. front view; H<sub>2</sub>. back view; I. a single carpel.

cies can easily be distinguished by its 3-carpellary pistil. It differs from the allied *O. hirsuta* King by its glabrous leaves, the 2- or 3-flowered inflorescence and the two oblong nectaries on the inner petals. From *O. multiflora* Jovet-Ast it differs by its number of stamens and the sculpture of the nectaries.

Shrubs 1–2 m tall, young shoots yellowish brown pilose. *Leaves* dark green above, paler beneath, glabrous, oblong or elliptic-oblong, acute, acuminate, or obtuse at tip, obtuse or cuneate at base, 5.5–9 × 2–3.5 cm, midrib impressed and

channelled above, lateral veins 4 or 5 pairs, irregularly archingly joined, prominulous above and prominent below, intercostae widely reticulate, inconspicuous above and prominulous below; petiole short, 2 mm long, adpressed tomentose. *Flowers* white, often with a pinkish tinge, in 2- or 3-flowered, axillary or extra-axillary pilose peduncles; bracts ovate-acuminate, densely pilose outside, 1 mm long. *Peduncle* slender, up to 2 cm long; pedicels capillary, up to 1.5 cm long, densely pilose. *Sepals* ovate-rounded, minutely tomentose outside, glabrous inside, up to 1 mm long and 1 mm broad at the base, shortly connate at base. Outer *petals* ovate-orbicular, minutely tomentose towards the margin, glabrous inside, 3 mm across; inner petals distinctly clawed, lozenge-shaped, glabrous, up to 4 mm long; nectaries two, narrowly oblong, vertical. *Stamens* 6, uniseriate; anther 1 mm long; filament 0.5 mm long; staminodes absent. *Carpels* 3; ovary glabrous, 1 mm long; ovules 2; style hairy. *Fruitlets* unknown.

*Distribution*. India (Kerala State: Western Ghats).

*Ecology*. An uncommon species in the undergrowths in evergreen forests at about 500 m above sea level. Flowering during March–April.

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#### REFERENCE

KEßLER, P.J.A. 1988. Revision der Gattung *Orophea* Blume (Annonaceae). *Blumea* 33: 1–80.