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

N. SASIDHARAN & V.V. SIVARAJAN

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 & Sivaran, spec. nov. – Fig. 1.


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.
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

---

Fig. 1. *Orophea malabarica* Sasidharan & Sivarajan. 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; H1. front view; H2. back view; I. a single carpel.
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.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors are deeply indebted to Dr. Paul Keßler, Rijksherbarium, Leiden, the Netherlands, for suggesting improvements on an earlier version of the manuscript and for various other support, and to Dr. Paul Fryxell, U.S.A. for the Latin diagnosis. Mr. S.D. Biju, University of Calicut, made the drawing.

REFERENCE