



A new species of *Leptopus* (Euphorbiaceae) from Nepal

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Key words

Euphorbiaceae
Leptopus nepalensis
Nepal
new species

Abstract A new species, *Leptopus nepalensis*, is described from the Lamjung district in Central Nepal. It resembles *L. cordifolius*, but differs in the glabrous and smaller elliptic to obovate leaves with shorter petioles, solitary staminate inflorescences, and flowers (both) with six sepals and petals and orbicular disc glands. The differences are summarized in a table.

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INTRODUCTION

The small genus *Leptopus* Decne. belongs to the subfamily *Phyllanthoideae* Asch., tribe *Phyllanthae* Dumort. of the *Euphorbiaceae*. It closely resembles *Andrachne* L., differing mainly in the erect habit and the anatropous ovules. The genus, with about 11 species, is native to Central Asia, extending to the Philippines and Indonesia. There are 4 species recorded for India of which only one species, *L. cordifolius* Wall. ex Decne. is known to occur in Nepal (Balakrishnan & Chakrabarty 2007). Interestingly, the material, *B. Adhikari 224* (TUCH), collected from Lamjung District of Central Nepal and reported as *Phyllanthus griffithii* Müll.Arg. (Adhikari et al. 2006) is now identified to be a species of *Leptopus*. On closer examination, it is found to resemble *L. cordifolius*, but differing from it in several respects (Table 1). It is evident that *Adhikari 224* represents a hitherto unrecognized species of the genus *Leptopus*, newly described here.

Leptopus nepalensis B.Adhikari, R.P.Chaudhary & S.K.Ghimire, *sp. nov.* — Fig. 1

Leptopus nepalensis affinis *L. cordifolio*, sed differt foliis glabris brevibus et ellipticis ad obovatus, petiolis brevioribus, inflorescentiis masculis solitariis, sepalis et petalis 6, glandulis discorum orbicularibus. — Holotypus: *B. Adhikari 224* (TUCH), Nepal, Central Nepal, Lamjung District, Durandanda-9, Chhaharo (below Jamune village).

Phyllanthus griffithii auct. non Müll.Arg.: B.Adhikari, S.K.Ghimire & R.P.Chaudhary (2006) 67, f. 1.

Subshrubs, monoecious, c. 1 m high, entirely glabrous; branchlets angled or ribbed towards apices, terete towards base. **Stipules** very minute, c. 1 mm long, caducous. **Leaves**: petioles 0.5–1.5 mm long, dark reddish; blade elliptic, oblong-elliptic to obovate, (0.4–)0.7–2 by (0.3–)0.5–1 cm, base subacute to rounded, margin entire, apex subacute to obtuse, green above when dry, faintly whitish beneath; lateral nerves 6–8 per side, inconspicuous above, prominent beneath. **Flowers** axillary, staminate ones solitary, pistillate ones solitary or in cluster of 2 or 3; bracts triangular, 0.5–1 mm long, apex acute;

pedicels capillary, 2–6(–10) mm long; sepals 6, in two whorls, suborbicular to broadly obovate, 0.5–1 by 0.4–0.8 mm; petals 6, minute, rounded or obovate, c. 0.3 mm long; hidden between the sepals and the disc gland lobes; disc glands 6, orbicular, c. 0.3 mm across. **Staminate flowers**: stamens 6, free; filaments c. 0.6 mm long, broad at base, narrowing upwards, recurved; anthers globose, 4-thecate, c. 0.3 mm across, introrse, longitudinally dehiscent; pistillode absent. **Pistillate flowers**: ovary globose or subglobose, c. 0.8 mm across, 3-locular; ovules 2 in each locule, anatropous; styles 3, c. 1.5 mm long, connate at base into a column up to about halfway, upper part free, bifid and recurved apically. **Capsules** subglobose, c. 3 mm diam, shallowly 3-lobed, smooth.

Distribution — See type.

Habitat & Ecology — Common on shady, bushy forest slopes at about 865 m altitude. Flowering and fruiting: April to July.

Etymology — The new species is named after the country Nepal.

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Table 1 Morphological differences between *Leptopus cordifolius* and *L. nepalensis*.

Characters	<i>L. cordifolius</i>	<i>L. nepalensis</i>
Leaf blades	2.5–11 by 0.8–4 cm, apex mucronate, tomentellous beneath or puberulous on midrib	(0.4–)0.7–2 by (0.3–)0.5–1 cm, apex subacute or obtuse, glabrous
Petioles	5–40 mm long	0.5–1.5 mm long
Staminate fascicles	2- or 3-flowered	solitary
Sepals and petals	5; petals spatulate	6; petals rounded or obovate
Disc glands	obcordate	orbicular

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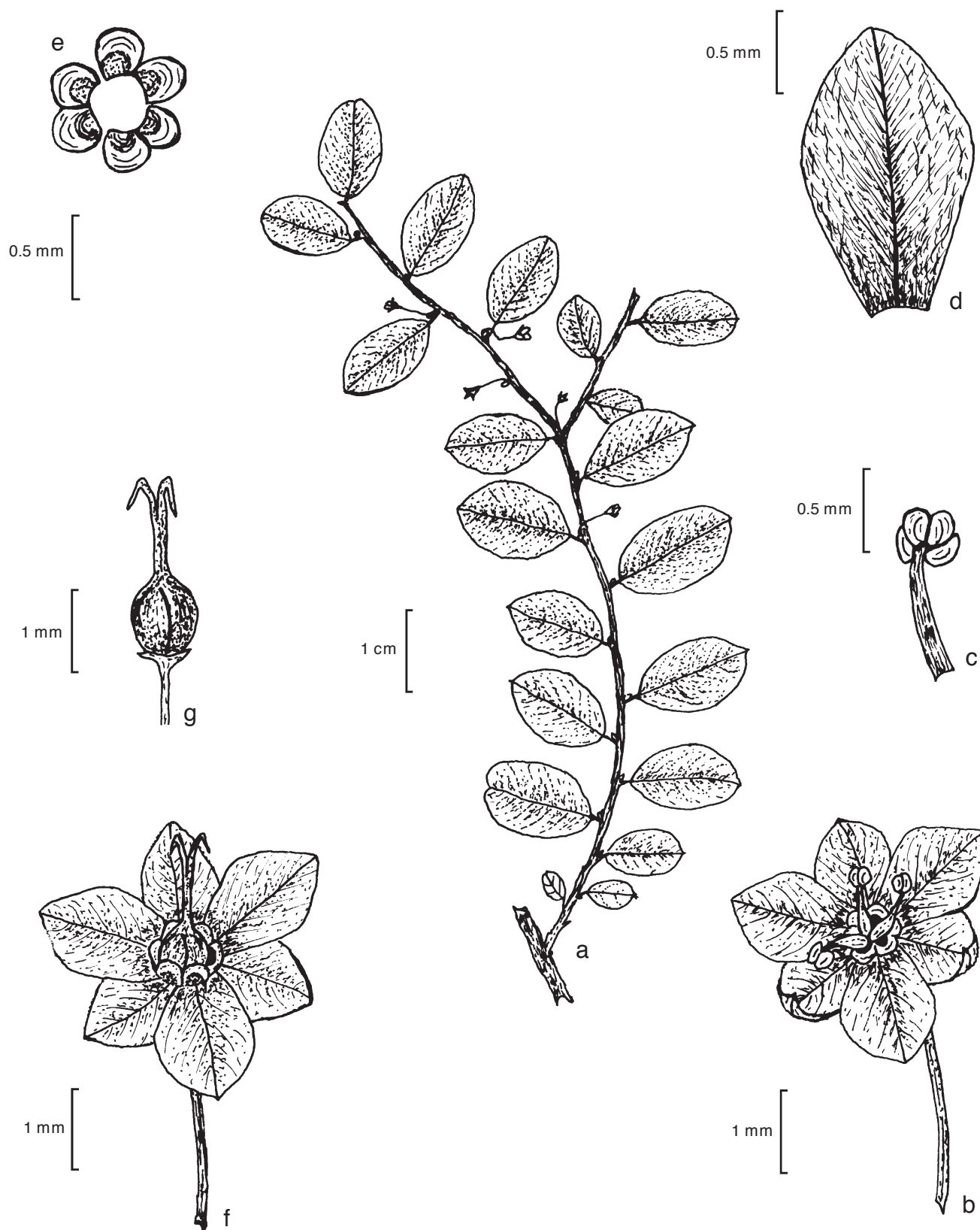


Fig. 1 *Leptopus nepalensis* B.Adhikari, R.P.Chaudhary & S.K.Ghimire. a. Flowering twig; b. staminate flower; c. stamen; d. sepals; e. petals with glands; f. pistillate flower; g. pistil (all: B. Adhikari 224, TUCH).