Ehretia longiflora (Boraginaceae): A new record for India from Andaman & Nicobar Islands

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Abstract

Ehretia longiflora Champ. ex Benth. is first reported from the Andaman & Nicobar Islands to the flora of India. A brief description with photographs is provided for easy identification.

Keywords: Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Boraginaceae, Ehretia longiflora, India, New Record.

Introduction

Ehretia P. Browne (Boraginaceae), the largest genus of the subfamily Ehretioideae comprises about 50 species, distributed mostly in Africa, South Asia, North America and the Caribbean islands (Zhu et al., 1995). Four species of Ehretia have been recorded in Andaman and Nicobar Islands so far (Pandey & Diwakar, 2008; Murugan et al., 2016). Among them, Ehretia dichotoma Blume and E. timorensis Decne. occur in Andaman Islands only while E. laevis Roxb. has been reported from both Andaman and Nicobar group of Islands. Ehretia microphylla Lam. is a cultivated species.

During floristic explorations in South Andaman Island, a few specimens belonging to the genus Ehretia were collected. Based on critical study and review of literature (Clarke, 1883; Sinha, 1999; Pandey & Diwakar, 2008; Murugan et al., 2016) revealed that this species was hitherto unrecorded from Andaman & Nicobar Islands and mainland India. In the present treatment the species is reported as new addition to the flora of India. A brief description along with photographs is provided to facilitate easy recognition of this species in the field.

Taxonomy


Trees, upto 10 m tall; bark dark gray to dark brown, scaly; young branches brown, lenticellate, branchlets greenish, glabrous. Leaves elliptic to oblong-oblanceolate, 3–16 × 3–7 cm, subcoriaceous, glabrous, base cuneate, margins entire, apex abruptly acute to short-caudate, greenish and shining above; lateral veins 4–7 pairs; petioles 1–3 cm long. Cymes terminal on lateral branches, flat topped, densely flowered, 3–6 cm wide; peduncles 2–5 cm long. Flowers sessile or on short pedicels, c. 1 cm long, 0.5 cm across, fragrant. Calyx 2–2.5 mm, hairy; lobes ovate, c. 1.5 mm long, ciliate along margins. Corolla tubular-campanulate, creamy to greenish white, 10–12 mm long, corolla tube 9–10 mm long, base c. 1.5 mm wide, slightly hairy, glabrous inside, throat 3–4 mm wide; lobes 5, ovate to elliptic-ovate, c. 2 mm, shorter than tube, spreading, soon becoming reflexed. Stamens 5, inserted 3.5–5 mm above the base of corolla tube; filaments filiform, 8–9 mm long, anthers c. 1 mm long. Ovary glabrous, c. 1 × 1 mm.; style 10–11 mm, 2-cleft at apex, branches c. 1 mm long, stigma capitate; ovules 4. Drupes glabrous, green when young, pale yellow to orange red when matured, 9–11 mm in diam.; endocarp divided at maturity into four 1-seeded pyrenes.

Flowering & fruiting: March–June.
Fig. 1. *Ehretia longiflora* Champ. ex Benth.: **a.** Habit; **b.** Flowering branch; **c.** Inflorescence; **d** & **e.** Flowers-close up views; **f** & **g.** Fruits-matured & ripened (Photos by Joju P. Alappatt).
Habitat: Rare in inland evergreen forests growing in association with Bombax insigne Wall., Cryptperonia paniculata Blume, Elaeocarpus tectorius (Lour.) Poir., Ficus callosa Willd., F. hispida L.f., F. nervosa B. Heyne ex Roth, Heteropanax fragrans (Roxb.) Seem., Pterocymbium tinctorum Merr. and Tetrameles nudiflora R.Br. at an elevation of about 20–30 m from the sea level.

Distribution: China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Vietnam and now in India.

Specimens examined: INDIA, Andaman & Nicobar Islands, South Andaman Island, Mt. Harriet Hill Ranges, near Hope Town, 31.03.2017, Joju P. Alappatt 1456 (Herbarium, Forest Training Institute, Wimberlygunj); Hope Town, 07.03.2018, Joju P. Alappatt 1519 (PBL). CHINA, Little Hong Kong, February 1958, C.Wilford 355 (K000998021, digital image!), Hong Kong, s.d., J.G. Champion s.n. (K000998018, digital image!); Ibid., 1854, G. Bentham 146 (K000998019, digital image!).

Notes: Ehretia longiflora belongs to a group of very closely related but geographically isolated species in which the other members are E. dunniana H.Lev. (South China), E. javonica Blume (Indonesia, Malesia and Thailand) and E. wallichiana Hook.f. & Thomson ex Gamble (North East India, Nepal, Burma and Bhutan). In E. dunniana secondary and tertiary veins are more evident in the leaf lamina. Young twigs, inflorescence and calyx are densely and minutely pubescent and corolla tube is less than 10 mm long. E. javonica has more rounded, more evidently veined, broadly elliptic leaves. E. wallichiana has thinner much more evidently veined leaves and flowers with a larger calyx (3.0–4.5 mm), shorter corolla tube (5–6 mm) and longer lobes (3.0–4.5 mm) and larger anthers (1.7 mm).

Key to the species of Ehretia in Andaman & Nicobar Islands

1. Cymes 1–3-flowered; leaves small (< 3.5 cm long) with few dentations at apex .................. E. microphylla
2. Cymes  many flowered; leaves large (> 5 cm long) margin serrate or entire ......................... 2
2. Corolla tube twice as long as corolla lobes........... ........................................................................... E. longiflora
3. Corolla tube shorter than or as long as corolla lobes ........................................................................ 3
3. Inflorescence produced on new shoots bearing well developed leaves........................................ E. dichotoma
4. Inflorescence produced on roughened/verrucose shoots of previous season before new leaves....... 4
4. Leaves smaller, ovate to lanceolate, shortly acuminate ................................................................. E. laevis
4. Leaves larger, broadly oblanceolate, more acuminate.................................................................E. timorensis

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Literature Cited


