

A new species of *Aeginetia* Linn. (Orobanchaceae) from Western Ghats.

G. R. Shivamurthy and L. Rajanna

Department of Botany, University of Mysore,
Manasagangotri, Mysore - 570 006

Abstract

Aeginetia sessilis Shivamurthy et Rajanna, sp. nov. from Western Ghats, is described and illustrated.

During the preparation of an account on parasitic Angiosperms, the authors collected an interesting *Aeginetia* Linn. (Orobanchaceae) from Western Ghats near Kerekatte in Chikkamagalur district and Kudremukh in Dakshina Kannada district, in Karnataka State. A perusal of relevant literature and critical examination and comparison with other species of *Aeginetia* revealed that it is a new species which is described and illustrated here.

***Aeginetia sessilis* Shivamurthy et Rajanna, sp. nov.** (Fig. 1-7)

Affinis *A. pedunculatae* (Roxb.) Wall. a qua minoritate amplitudinis, absentia pedunculi, 1—3 sessilibus floribus, ab brunnea ad lateritium coloratiis et obtusum apicem habentiis calicibus, atque capsula habente pauciora sed ampliora semina conspicue differt.

Allied to *A. pedunculata* (Roxb.) Wall., but differs mainly by smaller size, absence of peduncle, 1—3 bracteate sessile flowers, brown to brick-red calyx with obtuse tip without a hook-shaped beak and capsule bearing comparatively larger-sized, smaller number of seeds.

Type: Kerekatte 26.9.1992, *Shivamurthy* 114 (holo CAL, Iso MGM).

A leafless, holoparasite, 4—5 cm tall. Rhizome subterranean, simple with a primary haustorium and a tuft of lateral branches arising from a tubercle establishing secondary haustorial connections with host roots. Scape usually one arising from the tubercle, nearly sessile bearing usually 1, rarely 2—3

G. R. Shivamurthy and L. Rajanna

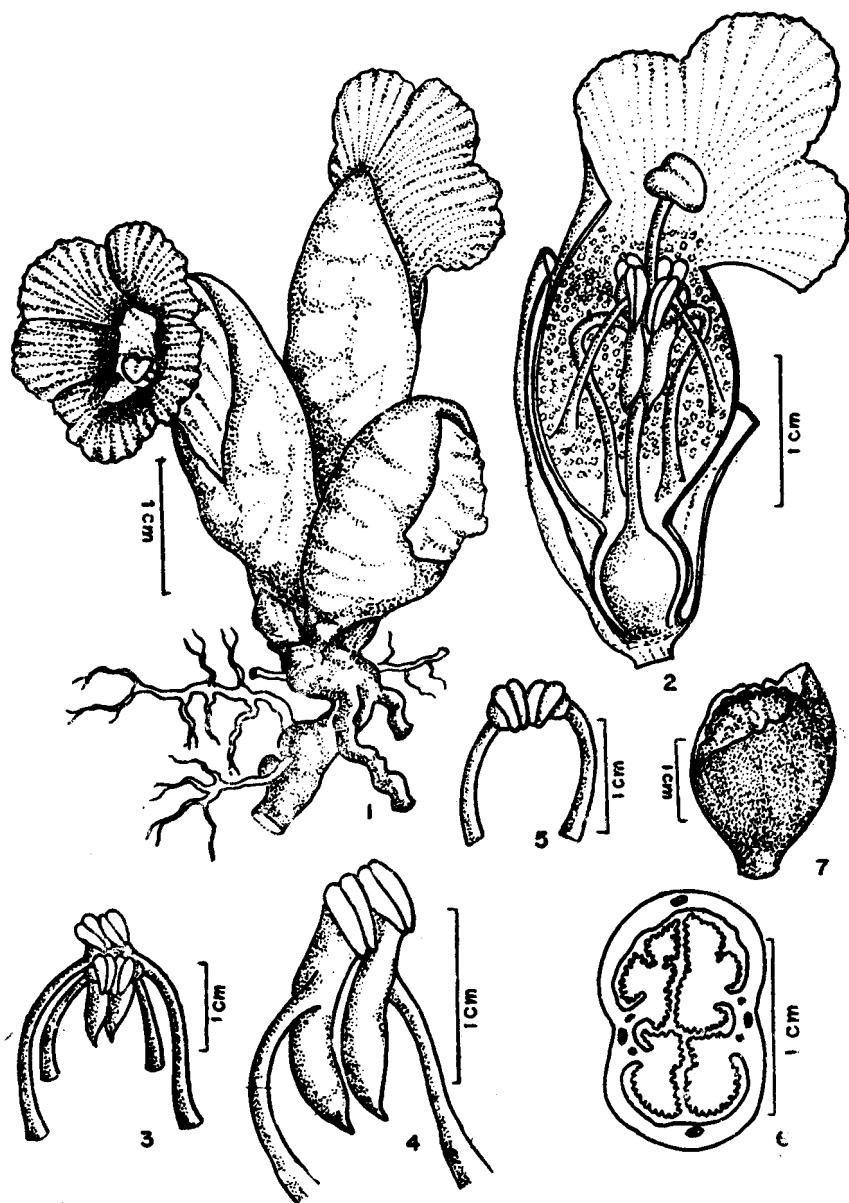


Fig: 1-7 *Aeginetia sessilis*. 1. Habit, 2. Flower, portion of calyx and corolla removed to show essential organs and glands on the inner side of the corolla tube, 3. Androecium showing approximation of anthers, 4. Longer pair of stamens showing conspicuous sterile appendages, 5. Shorter pair of stamens with inconspicuous appendages, 6. T. S. ovary, 7. fruit enclosed in calyx.

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flowers. Flowers bracteate, sessile 4—4.5 by 1—1.5 cm. Bract 1 cm, ovate-obtuse. Calyx to 2.5 cm long, spathaceous, split along the anterior side nearly to the base, brown to brick-red, partly enclosing the corolla tube, obtuse at tip without a hook-shaped beak. Corolla tube constricted near the ovary tip, to 4 by 1.5 cm, tube glabrous outside, with many 4-lobed glands on innerside secreting copious mucilage, cream-coloured, mouth bluish-pink with tinch of yellow inside near the throat on the antetior lobe; limb sublabiate; lobes crenulate along margin, dichotomously veined spreading, unequal, posterior outermost in bud. Stamens 4, didynamous, upper pair of shorter filaments to 1.5 cm long, lower pair to 2.5 cm; anthers of both pairs closely approximated, the longer pair with conspicuous, dorsal, fleshy, horn-like, saccate, decurved spur; Spur on the shorter pair inconspicuous. Ovary superior, bicarpellary, syncarpous, 1-celled; ovules numerous on 4-lobed, parietal placentae; style simple, curved; stigma cordiform, peltate. Fruit a capsule, 1.5 to 2 cm in diameter, enclosed in the dry calyx. Seeds comparatively fewer, oval, 60—90 microns, brown, outer tangential walls of testa cells in tact

Habitat: In grass lands, mostly on the roots of *Themeda triandra* Forsk. and *Chrysopogon hackelii* (Hook. f.) Fischer.

Flowers & Fruits: September to November.

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