

A new species of *Calamus* (Arecaceae) from Silent Valley, Kerala, India

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Abstract

A new species of *Calamus* is described from Silent Valley National Park, Kerala, India.

INTRODUCTION

Evergreen and semievergreen forests of Western Ghats form the largest natural home of rattans in South India. Altogether 19 species of the genus *Calamus* are reported from this region (Fischer, 1931; Fernandez & Dey, 1970; Renuka, 1992). Recently another taxon of the same genus could be collected from Silent Valley National Park in Palakkad District of Kerala State. Closer scrutiny revealed that this is a new species and hence is described and illustrated here.

Calamus neelagiricus Renuka, *sp. nov.* (Fig. 1)

Palmijuncus solitarius. *Vagina viridis spinis validis basibus bulbosis* and 1 cm longis armata, *rhachillae valde recurvatae circinatae*. *Fructus oblatus* 1 cm longi 0.5 cm lati, *periantho pedicellato, squamis in seriebus 21 stramineis in medio canaliculatis*.

Types: India, Kerala, Silent valley, evergreen forest, 1100 m, 10 March 1997. *Anto 7100* - (fr.) (Holotype - KFRI); *Ibid., Sasidharan & Anto 3698* - fruit (Paratype - KFRI).

Solitary, moderate sized rattan. Stem reaching upto 25 m, with sheaths 2.5-5 cm diam., without sheaths 3 cm, internodes to 21 cm long. Sheath green, spiny; spines 1 cm long, sturdy, with a blubous base; knee present; ocrea inconspicuous; flagellum 3-4 m long. Leaf ecirrate, to 2 cm long; petiole to 25 cm, petiole and rachis armed on the dorsal side with spines; spines 0.5 cm long, sturdy, bulbous based, ventral side spiny at the point of attachment of leaflet with the rachis; leaflets long acuminate, regular, 46 x 2 cm, midvein ciliate dorsally, lateral veins ciliate ventrally, cilia to 0.3 cm, apical leaflets free. Inflorescence flagellate, to 2.5 cm long, upto 6 partial inflorescences, heavy with profuse fruiting, pendulous; partial inflorescence 30 cm long; primary sheaths closely sheathing, completely armed with sturdy spines; rachillae to 13 cm long; strongly recurved

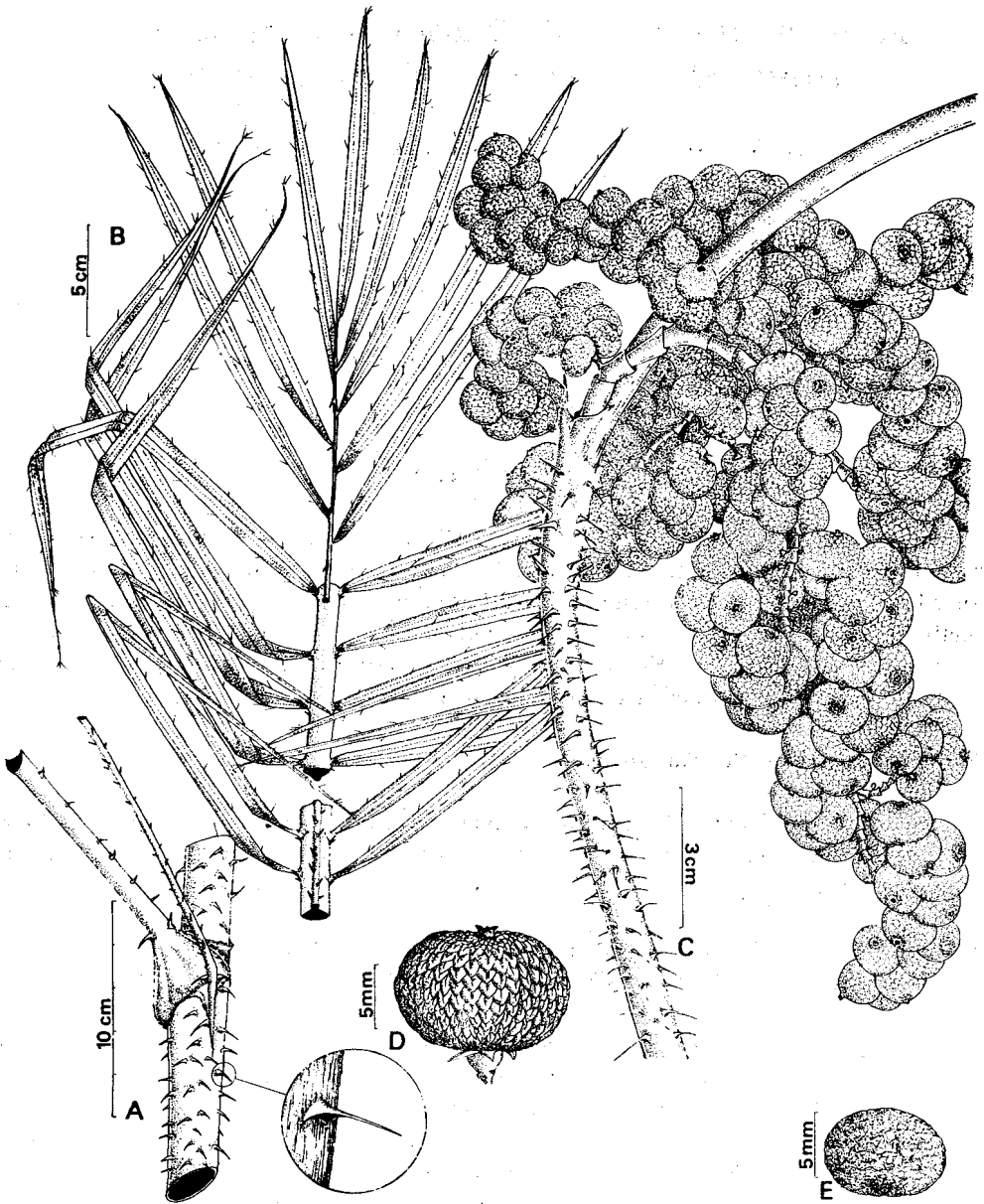
C. Renuka *et al.*

Fig. 1. *Calamus neelagiricus* Renuka: A. A portion of stem with leaf sheath; B. Portions of a leaf; C. A partial infructescence; D. Fruit; E. Seed .

A new species of *Calamus* (Arecaceae) from Silent Valley, Kerala, India

and coiled; secondary sheaths closely sheathing. Fruit oblate, 1 x 0.5 cm; fruiting perianth pedicellate, scales straw yellow when dry, channelled in the middle, in 21 series. Endosperm ruminant.

Etymology: The new species is named after the Neelagiri Hills from where the specimen collected.

This species comes under the group VIII of Beccari (1908). In vegetative characters this species is very close to *C. gamblei* and *C. delessertianus*, but lack cilia on the veins of the leaflets which is characteristic of the latter. From *C. gamblei* it can be distinguished from the shape and colour of the fruit which is oblate and straw yellow. In *C. gamblei* the basal part of the fruit is tapering and is golden yellow.

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