



***Tripogon tirumalae* (Poaceae), a new species from the Seshachalam hills of Andhra Pradesh, India**

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Abstract

Tripogon tirumalae, a new species of grass from the Seshachalam hill ranges, Andhra Pradesh, India, is described and illustrated. The new species differs from *Tripogon sivarajanii* in having ciliate membranous ligules, a shorter inflorescence, more florets, bearded lemma base, and a median awn longer than the lemma; and from *Tripogon trifidus* in having culms 60–75 cm high, glabrous leaf sheaths, and lemmas with a single median awn which is 1.5 times longer than the lemma.

Key words: Chloridoideae, Eastern Ghats, Penchalakona, Tripogoninae, Veligonda hills

Introduction

The genus *Tripogon* Roemer & Schultes (1817: 34) belongs to subtribe Tripogoninae Stapf, the tribe Chlorideae Martinov, subfamily Chloridoideae Kunth ex Beilschm. in the family Poaceae Barnhart (Peterson *et al.* 2010, Soreng *et al.* 2012). The genus is characterized by a solitary, spiciform inflorescence, and laterally compressed, 2–several flowered spikelets with 3–nerved lemmas (Clayton & Renvoize 1986). Globally, the genus comprises 44 species distributed in Africa, America, Australia, and Temperate and Tropical Asia (Clayton *et al.* 2006). There are 19 species of *Tripogon* reported from India (Bor 1960, Karthikeyan *et al.* 1989, Kabeer & Nair 2009), of which 15 are endemic. While exploring the Eastern Ghats, we collected two specimens from the Tirumala hills in Seshachalam Biosphere Reserve and the Penchalakona area of the Veligonda hill ranges in Andhra Pradesh. After critical study and comparison with other species of *Tripogon*, we describe these collections as a new species. The new species is closely related to *Tripogon sivarajanii* Sunil in Pradeep & Sunil (1999: 809), a species endemic to the Idukki district of the Kerala state of India, and to *Tripogon trifidus* Hooker (1896: 286), which occurs in northeast India, Bhutan, China, Myanmar, Nepal, Thailand and Vietnam.

Taxonomy

Tripogon tirumalae Alok Chorghe, Rasingam, Prasanna & M. Sankara Rao *sp. nov.* (Figs. 1, 2)

Tripogon tirumalae is similar to *Tripogon sivarajanii* and *Tripogon trifidus*, but differs from the former in having ciliate membranous ligules (membranous in *T. sivarajanii*), inflorescences 15–20 cm long (20–45 cm in *T. sivarajanii*), florets 9–10 (5–8 in *T. sivarajanii*), lemma base bearded (glabrous in *T. sivarajanii*), and a median awn longer than the lemma (shorter than or as long as the lemma in *T. sivarajanii*); and from latter species by having culms 60–75 cm high (20–50 cm in *T. trifidus*), leaf sheath glabrous near summit (bearded in *T. trifidus*), lemma lobes unawned (lemma lobes awned in *T. trifidus*), and the median awn 1.5 times longer than the lemma (2 times longer than the lemma in *T. trifidus*).

Type:—INDIA, Andhra Pradesh, Tirumala Hills, near Kumaradara Pusupudara Dam, 13° 43.509' N, 79° 19.345' E, 900 m elevation, 4 September 2012, L. Rasingam, M.S. Rao & Alok Chorghe 2914 (holotype CAL!, isotypes BSID!).