Cyperus coonoorensis (Cyperaceae), a new species from the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve, India

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Abstract

Cyperus coonoorensis sp. nov. (Cyperaceae) is described and illustrated as a new species from Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve, Western Ghats, India. A member of sect. Diffusi, the new species distinctly differs from related species, C. diffusus, by its long and stout rhizome, large inflorescence and number of florets and spikelets. A detailed description, phenology, illustration, colour plates, distribution and relevant notes are provided. A key to the sect. Diffusi in South Asia is also provided.

Keywords: Identification key, Tamil Nadu, Taxonomy, Western Ghats

Introduction

The genus Cyperus L. (1753: 44) is mainly distributed in tropical and subtropical regions of the world and has about 700 species (Tucker & Simpson 2013). In India it is represented by 91 species (Govaerts et al. 2014). The genus can be easily recognised by its nature of inflorescence with conspicuous involucral bracts, absence of perianth and distichous spikelets with several fertile glumes.

As part of taxonomic revision of the family Cyperaceae in the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve located in the Western Ghats, an interesting specimen of Cyperus belonging to sect. Diffusi (Kunth) C. B. Clarke (1884: 124) was collected from Coonoor, Nilgiri district, Tamil Nadu. It shows apparent similarity with Cyperus diffusus Vahl (1805: 321) in the shape of the glumes and wide leaves but distinctly differs from the already described species of section Diffusi. It is being described as new species with illustration and a discussion of its relationships with other known species.

Materials and Methods

Specimens were collected by the authors from Coonoor, Nilgiri district, Tamil Nadu within the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve. The specimens were prepared for herbarium as per standard procedure and fixed in Kew solution for further microscopic studies. In addition, national and regional herbaria (CALI, MH, TBGT, UCT and CAL) were searched for similar specimens. Virtual herbaria at C, E, G, K, MO, NY, P and US were also consulted. Measurements and line drawings were made using a Leica MZ6 stereomicroscope.

Taxonomy

Cyperus coonoorensis Viji, Pandur., Deepu & G.C.Tucker, sp. nov. (Fig. 1 & Fig. 2)

Type:—INDIA. Tamil Nadu: Nilgiri Distr., Coonoor, 11°20’59”N & 75°49’10”E, ± 1501 m, 24 March 2012, A. R. Viji & A. G. Pandurangan 72342 (holotype TBGT!; isotypes CALI!).
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References

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