SHORT COMMUNICATION

Asplenium formosum Willd. (Aspleniaceae): a new distributional record for the state Maharashtra

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ABSTRACT

Asplenium formosum is reported as new to here from the state of Maharashtra, India.

KEYWORDS: Asplenium formosum, new report, Maharashtra, India

Introduction

The genus Asplenium L. is the largest fern genus with ca 720 species. It is cosmopolitan in distribution. The genus is usually considered under the family Aspleniaceae which is mostly tropical in distribution. In India, the genus is represented by 65 species (Dixit 1984; Singh & Bir, 1989) with preponderance in South India (Manickam & Irudayaraj, 1991). In South India, there are 30 taxa (26 species, two varieties of A. unilaterale Lam., one variety of A. excisum Presl. and one variety of A. yoshinagae Makino subsp. indicum (Sledge) Fraser-Jenk.) (Azeez 2007). The genus is represented by only 5 species in Maharashtra namely, A. inequilaterale Willd., A. obscurum Bl., A. decrescens Kunze, A. polydon G. Forst, A. yoshinagae Makino subsp. indicum etc. (Ravat, 2016; Patil, 2017).

Material and Methods

During botanical expeditions in September 2018, the authors collected some interesting specimens of Asplenium from the locality Amboli of the state Maharashtra. Photographs of plant specimens are taken in their natural habitat. The collected plant is identified as Asplenium formosum Willd. Herbarium sheets were deposited in herbarium SUK, Shivaji University Kolhapur, Maharashtra.

Taxonomy


Stipes tufted, very short, naked, polished, dark brown; fronds 12-16 inches long; pinnae 20-31 pair (lower ones generally reduced), sessile, horizontal, 1/2 inch long, by 1 to ½ lines deep, the upper edge deeply cut, the apex rather obtuse, the lower edge truncate in a straight line, so that about half the lower side is cut away; texture herbaceous; veins obscure, simple or forked; sori linear-oblong, short, oblique, confined to the lower side, or 1-4 on each side of the midrib; veins obscure, simple or forked; sori linear-oblong, short, oblique, confined to the lower side, or 1-4 on each side of the midrib.

Ecology: Moister loving, epiphytic or lithophytes small hygroscopic herb at higher elevation, habit pendulous.

Specimen examined: Amboli Ghats, way to Danoli, 520 m. 14/09/2018. Anant Patil APP104[SUK].

Distribution World: Sri Lanka, Tropical America, West Indies, Africa, Angola, Congo, Netherlands Antilles, Venezuela, Tanzania,
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Results and discussion

Apparently Asplenium formosum is very similar with A. trichomanes, which has polished stipe and erect rhizome but only differs by shape of pinnae and position of sori. Asplenium formosum bears 2 or 3 sori per pinna, which are restricted to the lower unexcised portion and are more or less parallel to the excised portion of the pinna; unique character among Indian species of Asplenium L. Species of Asplenium L. are highly hygroscopic while Northern Western Ghats of Maharashtra are comparatively dryer than south and central Western Ghats; therefore Northern Western Ghats of Maharashtra has very less diversity in this genus. A. formosum is quite common in central and Southern Ghats but there is an absence of any single authentic report of occurrence of this species from Western Ghats of Maharashtra. Author collected very few specimens of this species from the locality Amboli, Maharashtra. This species seems to be very rare locally (Amboli) but probably widely distributed in Northern Western Ghats. A. formosum is native to new world (central or South America). Its distribution in India is restricted to peninsular region only.

References