

## CYCADACEAE

### **Cycas beddomei** Dyer

*Common English names* : Beddome's cycas, Cicas di Beddome.

*Vernacular names* : Tel.: Perita, Madhana - Kamakshi.

*Trade name* : Andhra Pradesh Cycas, Cycad.

*Distribution* : This species is the global endemic of Seshachalam hills (formerly called as Cuddapah - Tirupati hills) of the Southern Eastern Ghats of Andhra Pradesh.



**Cycas beddomei** Dyer

Photo Courtesy: B. Ravi Prasad Rao

*Habitat* : They occur in dry deciduous forests and on the exposed quartzite rock and sandy black soils in valleys of Tirupati hills at altitudes between 300 - 1100 m; along the rock strewn holy streams of the Tirumala in association with *Phoenix pusilla* Gaertn., *Decaschistia*

*cuddapahensis* T.K. Paul & M.P. Nayar, *Gardenia gummifera* L. f. and *Pterocarpus santalinus* L.f.

*Population status/Cause for RET* : Endangered (B. Ravi Prasad Rao, Medplant 5: 11-12. 2012). Destruction of natural habitat, forest clearing and over exploitation of the species has resulted in its decline. Selective removal of female plants by some collectors as the cones are more attractive and fetch a higher price which upsets the male to female plants ratio.

*Description* : Shrubs to 2 m high, dioecious; bark brown, exfoliating in rectangular scales. Leaves up to 1 m long; rachis quadrangular, petiole up to 15 cm long with minute spines on upper portion, base clothed with tufted tomentum; leaflets narrow, linear, 10 - 18 x 0.2-0.35 cm, margins revolute, apex pointed. Male cone oblong-ovoid, up to 35 x 16 cm with a short peduncle; microsporophyll oblong, deltoid, tapering, acuminate at apex, lower erect, upper strongly recurved. Megasporophylls ovate-lanceolate, up to 4 x 2 cm; ovules usually 2 - 4. Seeds globose.

*Medicinal properties and other uses* : Seeds edible. The seeds are processed and eaten in mixture with 'Ragi' cereal. Crude flour made out of the endosperm of the seeds of this plant is used as one of the ingredients in the preparation of Sweet and Dhosa. The male cones are pruned away by local tribals for its professed medicinal properties and are used as a major ingredient in rejuvenating tonics. The male cones of this plant are also considered to possess the narcotic properties like that of *C. circinalis*. Further, this plant is horticulturally valued due to the palm-like appearance. The male cones of this plant are used by local herbalists as a cure for rheumatoid and muscle pains. The seeds are ground to a paste with coconut oil and are used as a poultice to treat skin complaints such as wounds, sores and boils.

*Parts used commercially* : Pith, Cones.

*Commercial/Ex-Im data* : It is learnt from the local people that male cones of *C. beddomei* are collected and sold in Chennai market for a maximum of Rs. 1,000/- per cone.

*Legal* : Listed in Appendix II on 4.2.1977, included in Appendix I w.e.f. 22.10.1987. Also included in 'Schedule VI' of the Wild Life (Protection) Act 1972 of India.

*References* :

Jain, S.K. & A.R.K. Sastry (1980). Threatened Plants of India. A State-of-the Art Report. P. 40.

Nayar, M.P. & A.R.K. Sastry (1987). Red Data Book of Indian Plants. Vol. 1, p. 359.  
Selvam, A.B.D. (2012). Pharmacognosy of Negative Listed Plants. Pp. 48-58.  
Walter, K.S. & H.J. Gillett (1998). 1997 IUCN Red List of Threatened Plants. P. 30.