

Chlorophytum gothanense, a new species of Anthericaceae from the Western Ghats of India

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Summary. A new species of *Chlorophytum* is described and illustrated. It is adapted to grow on the open, exposed lateritic plateaus in the Northern Western Ghats of India. The chromosome number of the species is $2n = 28$.

Key Words. *Chlorophytum*, India, new species, Western Ghats.

Introduction

The genus *Chlorophytum* Ker-Gawl., one of the main genera of the family Anthericaceae (Conran in Kubitzki 1998) with about 215 species, is distributed in the Old World tropics especially in Africa and India (Mabberley 2000; Govaerts 2006). Recently, Poulsen & Nordal (1999), Sardesai *et al.* (2006), Awas & Nordal (2007) and Bjora *et al.* (2008) added 10 new taxa to the genus. In India the genus is represented by 15 species (Karthikeyan *et al.* 1989) with maximum diversity in the Western Ghats. The Indian species of *Chlorophytum* are adapted to varied habitats ranging from forest undergrowth and steep slopes amongst grasses to open exposed rocky lateritic plateaus.

High altitudinal rocky lateritic plateaus are one of the unique habitats in the Northern Western Ghats. These plateaus have a rich herbaceous flora. They support growth only during the monsoon season and for rest of the period act as germplasm banks for the herbaceous flora. Most of the endemic and endangered ephemeral flora is restricted to these lateritic plateaus. These botanically rich plateaus were neglected by earlier botanists but in recent years the importance of monsoon ephemerals has been recognised and explorations were carried out to document the plant diversity of the lateritic plateaus. The high altitudinal discontinuous plateaus can be considered as the “islands” of the Western Ghats. Critical surveys of these plateaus have led to the discovery of some new ephemeral taxa, namely *Aponogeton satarensis* Sundararagh., A. R. Kulk. & S. R. Yadav, *Eulalia shrirangii* Salunkhe & Potdar, *Mnesithea veldkampii* Potdar, S. K. Gaikwad, Salunkhe & S. R. Yadav, *Eriocaulon epedunculatum* Potdar, Anil Kumar bis, Otaghvari & Sonkar (Yadav *et al.* 2009), all usually restricted to their type localities.

During exploration of the Gothane plateau in Ratnagiri district of Maharashtra state an interesting

population of *Chlorophytum* was collected. On critical analysis of the population it was found that the species is not amongst the described species of *Chlorophytum* (Hooker 1892; Sharma *et al.* 1996; Nordal *et al.* 1997), hence a new species is described and illustrated here.

Taxonomy

***Chlorophytum gothanense* Malpure & S. R. Yadav sp. nov.** *Chlorophyto boriviliano* similis, tuberibus pedicellatis (non sessilibus), perianthii lobis 5-nervatis (non 3-nervatis), filamentis omnino teretis (non basi applanatis) quam antherae lobis aequalibus vel brevioribus (non longioribus), pedicellis infra articulum cylindricis (non trigonis) differt. Typus: India, Maharashtra, Ratnagiri, Gothane (17°05.355'N, 3°45.534'E), 23 July 2005, Malpure 2 (holotypus CAL; isotypi BSI, K, Shivaji University Herbarium).

Perennial tuberous herbs. *Root tubers* 5 – 13, stalked, elliptic, fusiform, up to 15 cm long. *Leaves* 5 – 11, all radical, sessile, imbricate at base; leaf lamina 7 – 37 × 1.5 – 3 cm, lanceolate to lorate or ensiform, slightly falcate, subcoriaceous, channelled, 14 – 18 veined, apex acute-acuminate, margins hyaline. *Scape* 1(2), to 35 cm long, unbranched, usually longer than leaves, without sterile bracts in the lower portion. *Flowers* white, 2.4 – 2.6 cm across, bracteate, pedicellate, usually in alternate clusters, each consisting of 1 – 3 flowers. Floral bracts large, subtending many smaller bracts, 0.7 – 1.0 × 0.3 – 0.4 cm, persistent, acute with triangular base, margins hyaline; pedicels 0.9 – 1.3 cm long, whitish, jointed at the middle, nodding in flower, disarticulating at the joint, lower part of the pedicel cylindrical, persistent, 0.6 – 0.8 cm long, elongating in fruit up to 1.3 cm, part above the joint cylindrical, falling off with the flower or fruit. *Perianth segments* 6, in two whorls of 3 each, divergent in flower, outer perianth segments 1.2 – 1.4 ×

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