

RESEARCH NOTE:

New record for melghat tiger reserve project flora from Amravati division (M.S.)

K.W. PAWAR AND U.S. CHAUDHARI

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Melghat forest is one of the characteristic natural habitats of tropical dry deciduous forest in Amravati district. Melghat forest is endowed with distinctive climatic conditions conducive for the growth and development of some of the temperate plants. Home to both tigers and tribals, the MTR is one of the first 9 Tiger Reserves of the country that was brought under the project Tiger network in February 1973 among three Tiger Reserves of Maharashtra. Melghat stands literally tall and proud as the oldest and largest Tiger Reserve of the state.

Extensive work on floristic study of Melghat comprising 600 plant species had been carried out by Patel (1968). Thereafter flora of Melghat Tiger Reserve was compiled by Dhore and Joshi (1988) and included 648 species of which 160 monocots and 488 dicots were identified. Bhogaonkar and Devarkar (1999) in "Additions to the flora of Melghat", added 67 plant species in which 19 monocots and 48 dicots were identified.

During the field survey only one plant unreported from Melghat Tiger Reserve was observed by the authors. The plant is younger and approximately is of eight to ten years old (Fig. 1). Place of location of *G. resinifera* is near Gullarghat naka, in front of Hunuman temple, at yard corner of Government quarters, on left hand side of Gullarghat-Belkund road. It might be introduced by some forest persons however, it remains unnoticed till date hence there was no record of plant in earlier floras written on Melghat. A single plant of the same species is noticed at old Botanical garden in Vidarbha Institute of Humanities and Sciences, Amravati. Later species is medium height tree and is appeared to be more than 45 years old. The



Fig. 1: Habitat of *G. resinifera* in MTR

flower colour is bright white (Fig. 2) and flowering period is March to August; fruiting during August to September (Fig. 3). From the tip of the young shoot yellow colour resin oozes out which gives typical fragrance (Fig. 4).

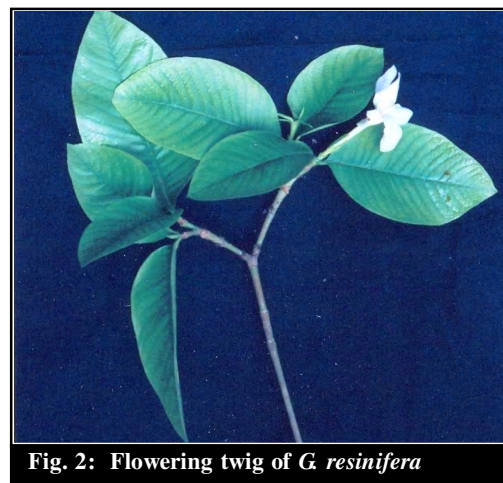


Fig. 2: Flowering twig of *G. resinifera*

Herbarium specimen of both the plants was prepared and stored at Departmental herbarium, Department of Botany, SGB Amravati University, Amravati. Naturally fallen fruits of *G. resinifera* and *G. latifolia* were also collected and kept in plastic bottles in dry place. For confirmation of species, herbarium specimens were deposited to Western Circle, Botanical Survey of India,

See end of the article for authors' affiliations

Correspondence to :

K.W. PAWAR

P.G. Department of Botany, S.G.B. Amravati University, AMRAVATI (M.S.) INDIA
bhushanwpawar@yahoo.com

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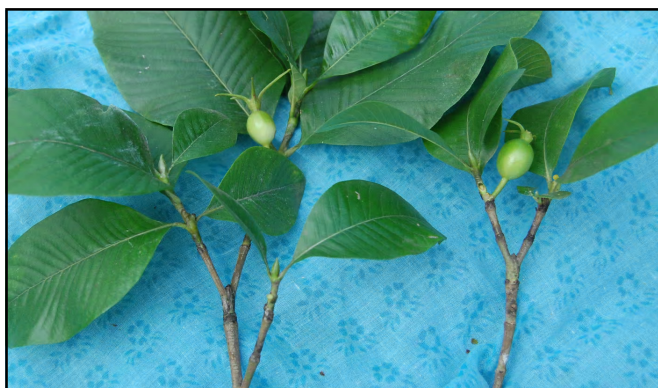


Fig. 3: Fruiting twig of *G. resinifera*

Pune.

Gardenia resinifera Roth. A fragrant exudation, known in India as “Dikamali”, resin is procured from the tops of the branches. It is extensively used in Indian hospitals as a slight dressing for open wounds, to keep away flies from the sores, on account of its strong aroma (Simmonds, 1985). The gum-resin exudes from the wounds in the bark is collected and sold in the bazaar as crude drug. The gum is having hot, sharp, pungent aroma; increases the appetite; astringent to the bowels; relieves the pains of bronchitis and vomiting; relieves constipation (Kirtikar and Basu, 1975).

Essential oil is extracted from the flowers by petroleum ether. *Gardenia* flower oil is yellowish in colour and contains benzyl acetate, styrolyl acetate, linalool, linalyl acetate, terpineol and methyl anthranilate. The oil resembles the perfume of the living flowers which possess very delicate fragrance (Bhattacharjee, 2000). This new record of *Gardenia resinifera* Roth. is definitely an added wealth to the prestigious flora of MTR.

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Authors' affiliations:

U.S. CHAUDHARI, P.G. Department of Botany, S.G.B. Amravati University, AMRAVATI (M.S.) INDIA

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