

REPORT OF *BURMANNIA CHAMPIONII* THW. FROM UTTARA KANNADA, CENTRAL WESTERN GHATS, KARNATAKA

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ABSTRACT

Burmattia championii Thw., a saprophytic herb, is reported for the first time in Karnataka from a *Myristica* swamp in Uttara Kannada district, extending thereby its northern limit of distribution in Western Ghats.

INTRODUCTION

Burmattia championii Thw., a white filamentous, saprophytic herb of the family Burmanniaceae has been recorded in the undergrowth of a relic forest, the *Myristica* swamp and adjoining evergreen forest of Kathalekan, Western Ghats, Uttara Kannada, South India. This plant was observed during the ongoing ecological field investigations for the preparation of "Conservation Flora of Uttara Kannada District". Globally the plant is Oriental in distribution (Sri Lanka, Malayan peninsula, Southern China, Japan, Malayan Archipelago). It has been reported from Kerala in 1977 (Joseph *et al.*, 1979) and from Andaman & Nicobar Islands (Hajra, 1988) in India. This report gives the further extension of the plant to the north of Western Ghats, forming a new addition to the flora of Karnataka.

A specimen of *Burmattia* Linn. was collected from the study site, which was later identified as *Burmattia championii* Thw. after critical examination and references to relevant floras (Hooker, 1890; Manilal, 1988; Vajravelu, 1990). So far, this species is not recorded beyond Palakkad, Kerala (Joseph, *et al.*, 1979; Hajra, 1988; Manilal, 1988; Vajravelu, 1990; Sasidharan, 2004; Nayar *et al.*, 2006) and this report will be the northern distribution in Western Ghats.

***Burmattia championii* Thw.**, Enum. Pl. Zeyl. 325. 1864; Hook. f., Fl. Brit. India 5:666. 1890; Balakrishnan in Bull. Bot. Surv. India 18(1-4): 230-231. 1976; Joseph *et al.*, in Journ. Bombay Nat. Hist. Soc. 76: 552-553. 1979; Hajra, Fasc. Fl. India 19: 9. 1988; Manilal, Fl. Silent Valley Tropical Rain forests of India 267. 1988; Vajravelu, Flora of Palghat District 461. 1990;

Sasidharan, Floristic studies in Parambikulam Wildlife Sanctuary 315. 2002.

Burmannia dalzielii Rendle in J. Bot. 40: 311. 1902.

Saprophytic herb, with underground tuber of about 1 cm length and 0.6 cm diameter. Stem 7-15 cm high and 1 mm in diameter, slender, white. Scales 2-4 mm long, spirally arranged; basal scales shorter. Bracts 3-4 mm long. Inflorescence terminal, capitate or sub-capitate, 2 to 7-flowered. Flowers bisexual, wingless, up to 1.2 cm long, white. Outer

perianth lobes up to 3 mm; inner perianth lobes 1.5 mm long, minutely pubescent. Ovary to 3 mm, oblong-ovoid; style thick, filiform; stigma 3-lobed. Capsules ellipsoid-oblong.

Flowers: September-October.

Habitat: Found in the undergrowth of *Myristica* swamps and adjoining evergreen forest at an altitude of 552 m in association with *Pinanga dicksonii*, *Gymnacranthera canarica*, *Myristica fatua* var. *magnifica* and *Lophopetalum wightianum*.

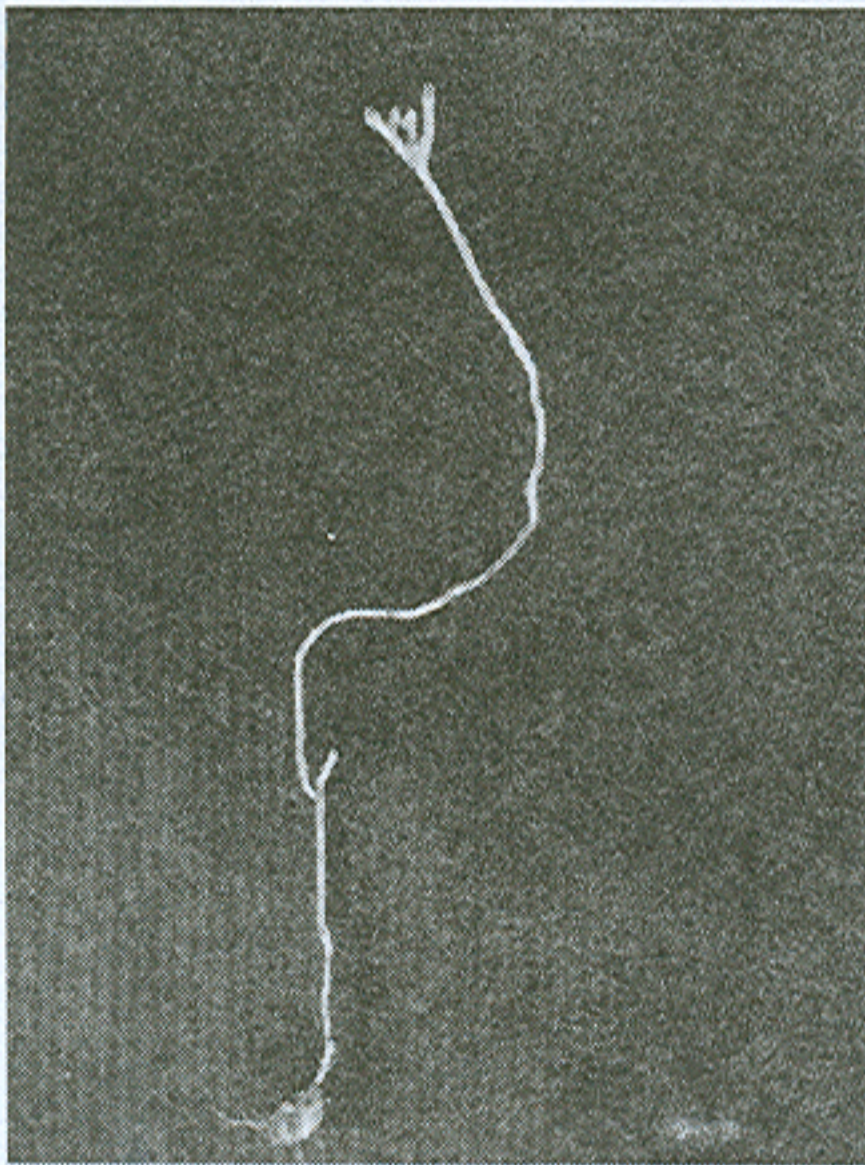


Fig. 1. *Burmannia championii* - habit.

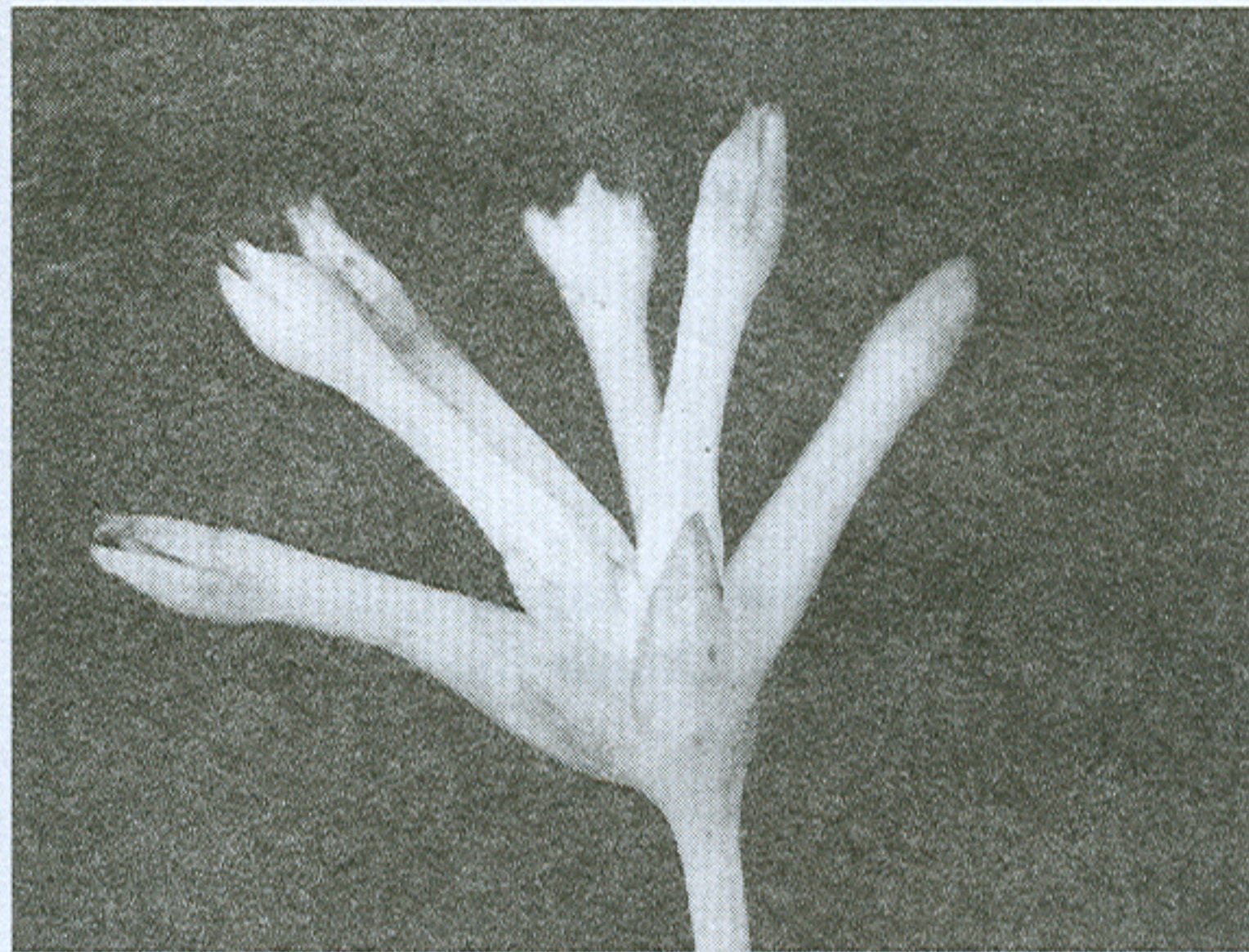


Fig. 2. *Burmannia championii* - capitate inflorescence.



Fig. 3. *Burmannia championii*-habit (Close up).

Distribution: India: (Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Kerala), Sri Lanka, Malayan Peninsula, Southern China, Japan, Malayan Archipelago. Recently this plant is reported from Taiwan (Sasidharan, 2004; Nayar, 2006; Hsieh & Ohashi, 2000).

Specimen examined: India : Karnataka, Uttara Kannada dist., Siddapur, Kathalekan *Myristica* Swamp, 552 m, *Diwakar* CES/EWRG/Herbaria/4621. Type: Ceylon (Sri Lanka), *Thwaites* 2735 (Herb. PDA); Isotypes (BM!, CAL, B, G-BIOS, G-DEL, GOTT, P, DR, W).

Notes :

The shoot with terminal inflorescence is found emerging from a heap of decaying litter and wet soil, during the rainy season. When carefully observed it had a capitate inflorescence at the tip with 2-6 flowers. All morphological aspects tallied with the *Burmannia championii* Thw. of Joseph *et al.* (1979).

During early monsoon many plants come out on forest floor from the subterranean tubers. Even though it is a common herb in the evergreen forests during the rainy season, it may have lost the attention of Botanists due to its short life span and appearance like some fungal fruiting body.

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