

REDISCOVERY OF *DICLIPTERAL BEDDOMEI* C.B. CLARKE (ACANTHACEAE), AN ENDEMIC AND RARE PLANT FROM NALLAMALAIS AFTER A CENTURY

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Nallamalais in Andhra Pradesh, South India comprises compact hill ranges, covering about a forest area of 5,161 sq. km, with 39 percent of the forest occurring in flat and generally rolling hills and 61 per cent in hill ranges (Parthasarathy, 1978). Two thirds of this forest cover is in Kurnool district and the rest in Mahabubnagar, Cuddapah and Prakasam districts.

The richness and diversity of vegetation in Nallamalais are unique in an arid zone. This region abounds with rich flora, perhaps due to fertility of soil and higher water table. The biotic interference has had a marked effect on the vegetation leading to the extinction of valuable and rare species. Very recently under the joint sponsorship of Andhra Pradesh and Tamilnadu Governments the digging of canals and construction of reservoir at Velugode for Telugu Ganga project is in progress which will submerge about 4,805 hectares of reserve forest of Nallamalais. This will further worsen the ecology of this area.

In view of the above of the facts, intensive explorations were conducted by the authors during the years 1987-89 in the dense forests of Nallamalais to locate the endemic, rare and threatened plants. This resulted in the rediscovery of *Dicliptera beddomei* which is an endemic and rare plant from this area.

This species resembles its allied species *D. cuneata* in many respects, but differs from it in the following characters,

<i>D. cuneata</i>	<i>D. beddomei</i>
1. Flowers in subcapitate peduncled clusters	1. Flowers in lax panicles
2. Bracts obovate-oblong	2. Bracts spatulate
3. Flowering rachises glabrous	3. Flowering rachises with prominent white hairs

For better understanding and easy identification of this species the citation, description, illustrations and other details are given below.

Dicliptera beddomei C.B. Clarke in Hook. f., Fl. Brit. India 4: 551. 1885; Gamble, Fl. Pres. Madras 2: 751. 1957 (repr. ed.).

A slender erect herb, up to 40 cm tall, branches straight. Leaves up to 12 x 7 cm, minutely pubescent, ovate, base attenuate, margin entire, apex acuminate, petiole to 5 cm. Flowers pink in trichotomous cymes on lax panicles, the flowering rachises white hairy; the inflorescence bracts linear; the flowering bracts spatulate-obovate, hairy, bracteoles linear-lanceolate; calyx lobes 5, linear, corolla pink, 8 x 1.5 mm across; distinctly bilabiate; lobes 5, unequal. Stamens 2, anthers 2-celled; superposed. Capsule clavate, up to 0.8 cm in length, pubescent.

Only two plants of this taxon were collected on 7-2-1989 on way from Rollpenta to Peccheruvu (about 2 km from Peccheruvu) in Nallamalais in Kurnool district and deposited in the Herbarium of Department of Botany, Sri Krishnadevaraya University Anantapur.

Specimens Examined: Nallamalais, D. Ali Mouli & P.S.P. Babu 8388 (S.K. University).

Note: A perusal of the herbaria CAL, MH, DD, BLAT and HH revealed that there are no specimens of this species in any of these herbaria. However type specimen collected by Beddome is in the Kew Herbarium. Henry *et al.* (1979) have included this species in the list of rare and threatened plants of South India and remarked that there are no specimens in MH. Nayar *et al.* (1986) included this species in the list of endemic plants of Andhra Pradesh. Clarke (1885) has described this species basing on the Beddome's specimen (Nallamalais-Kurnool 1873) present at Kew. Gamble (1957) mentioned that it was endemic to Nallamalai hills of Kurnool. Ellis (1968, 1987, 1990) during his intensive explorations could not collect this taxon from Nallamalais. Hence this is the only subsequent collection of this taxon after 115 years of Beddome's type collection in 1873. The

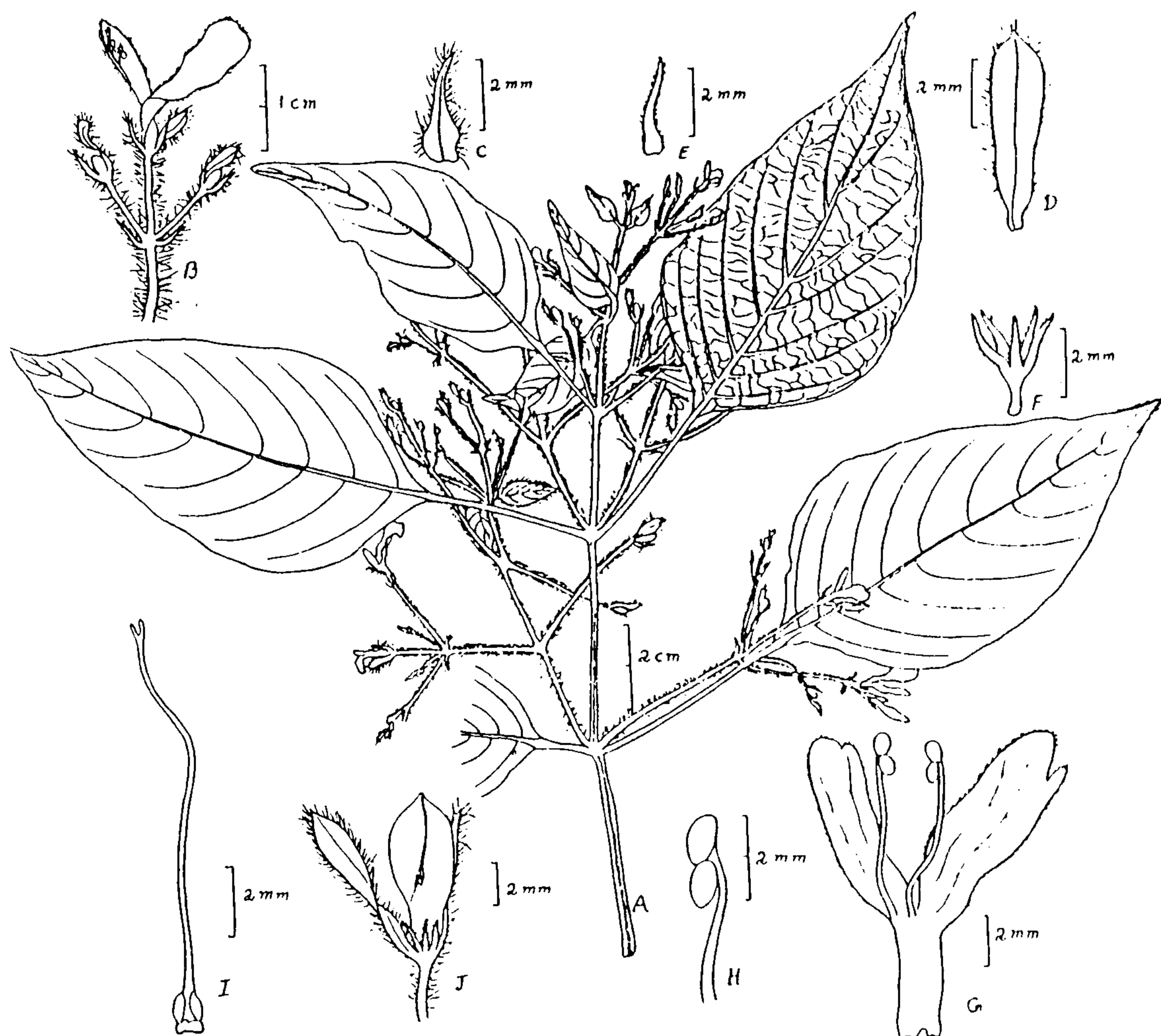


Fig. 1. *Dicliptera beddomei* C.B. Clarke A: Twig, B: panicle branch, C,D: Bracts, E: Bracteole, F: Calyx, G: Corolla split open, H: Stamen, I: pistil, J: Capsule

present collection constitutes an important rediscovery of this endemic and rare plant which will be helpful for the revision of Flora of India.

Authors are thankful to the authorities of the herbaria CAL, MH, DD and BLAT for permission to consult the herbaria and for help rendered in the identification of the above plant. They thank the keeper of the Kew Herbarium for confirming the presence of the type specimen at Kew.

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