



## ***GEODORUM LAXIFLORUM* GRIFFITH (ORCHIDACEAE), A NEW DISTRIBUTIONAL RECORD FOR SOUTHERN PENINSULAR INDIA**

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*Geodorum laxiflorum* Griffith, an endemic orchid of India is collected for the first time in Southern Peninsular India from Nallamalais, part of Eastern Ghats of Andhra Pradesh State. Technical description, distribution and photographs are provided for the species.

**Key words:** *Geodorum laxiflorum*, New Record, Southern Peninsular India.

*Geodorum* Jackson is a small genus of Orchidaceae comprising about 10 species (Bose *et al.* 1999), of which 6 occur in India (Sarat Misra 2007). *Geodorum* is widely distributed in Australasia and Pacific Islands. All the species are terrestrial cormous herbs. During recent floristic explorations in Nallamalais, a Centre of Plant Diversity located in the Eastern Ghats of Andhra Pradesh, we could collect few interesting orchid specimens, which after a critical examination were identified belonging to *G. laxiflorum* Griffith. This species is apparently endemic to India (Sarat Misra 2004). After a thorough perusal of literature (Sharma *et al.* 1984, Joseph and Ansari 1989, Ramakrishna 1997, Sathish Kumar and Manilal 2004, Sasidharan 2004, Reddy *et al.* 2005, Raju *et al.* 2008) it is found that the species has been located for the first time in Southern Peninsular India (comprising the states of Karnataka, Kerala, Tamilnadu and Andhra Pradesh). It is interesting to note that this species has not been reported by Fischer (1928) and Karthikeyan *et al.* (1989). So far only two species of *Geodorum*, *G. densiflorum* (Lam.) Schltr. and *G. recurvum* (Roxb.) Alston have been recorded from Southern Peninsular

India and present report added one more species of *Geodorum*.

***Geodorum laxiflorum*** Griffith, Calcutta J. Nat. Hist. 5: 356, t. 23, 1845; Hook. f., Fl. Brit. India 6: 18. 1890; Sarat Misra, Orch. Orissa 560. 2004 and Orch. India 300. 2007. (**Plate 1**)

Terrestrial cormous herbs. Corms greenish-brown, ovoid, slightly compressed, to 2.5 x 2.2cm; roots vermiform. Pseudostem of leaf sheaths 8-9cm long. Leaves 2 or 3, alternate, distichous, elliptic-lanceolate, acute to acuminate, undulate, plicate, 16-24 x 5.5-6.5cm. Inflorescence lateral, shorter than or as long as leaves, 15-20cm long; racemes recurved at top, laxly-flowered; peduncles with 3-5 oblong-lanceolate acuminate sheaths with long tubular bases. Flowers white, to 3 x 2.6cm, perianth spreading. Bracts green, smaller, oblong-lanceolate, 3-veined, to 0.7 x 0.2cm. Sepals 3, subequal, 7-veined, lateral veins branched; dorsal sepal oblong, acute, 2.4 x 0.7cm; lateral sepals oblong, acute, base oblique, 2.4 x 0.6cm. Petals 2, broader than the sepals, oblong-ovate, acute, base oblique, 7-veined, lateral veins branched, 2 x 1cm. Lip

**LEGEND**

**Plate 1:** *Geodorum laxiflorum* Griffith (Orchidaceae) a. Habit; b. Flower (Close-up)



superior, sessile, attached to the column foot, cymbiform, square shaped, entire, emarginate, 2 x 1.7cm, 14-veined, veins branched little above the base, base ventricose, epichile edges deflexed, disc with warts and brown coloured thick dots starting at the base of the hypochile and ending before the apex; hypochile golden brown within, epichile base yellow and apex pink-coloured. Column stout, short, oblong, 0.6cm long, veined. Anther broadly ovate-orbicular, 2-loculed; pollinia yellow, ovoid, 0.2cm long.

**Flowering:** June-July. **Fruits:** not seen.

**Ecology:** Very rare in dry deciduous forests of Nallamalais, at an elevation range of about 600m above MSL. Found grown in sandy-black soils. Common associates are *Andrographis nallamalayana* J. L. Ellis and *Geodorum densiflorum* (Lam.) Schltr.

**Specimens Examined:** Rollapenta (Nallamalai hills), 26.07.2009, B. Ravi Prasad Rao & K. Prasad **34616 (B) & 34617 (SKU)**.

**Distribution:** Endemic to India (Assam, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Orissa and Andhra Pradesh).

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