



SESAMUM ALATUM THONN. (PEDALIACEAE) - A NEW RECORD FOR THE FLORA OF KERALA

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The new distributional record of *Sesamum alatum* Thonn. from Kerala, India is described and illustrated.

Keywords: Kerala, *Sesamum alatum*

The genus *Sesamum* L. of the family Pedaliaceae consist of 37 species (Kobayashi, 1981) and are distributed in tropical and subtropical regions of the world (Ashri 1998). In India, *Sesamum* is represented by 3 species (Hooker 1885). However, Gamble (1921) reported 3 species from South India too. According to Sasidharan (2004), its representation is confined to four species in Kerala while 5 species was recorded by Nayar *et al.* (2006).

During the investigation on the genus *Sesamum*, the authors came across a new species from Kollam District, Kerala. On critical study of the specimen combined with description and illustrations in the Flora of Zimbabwe (www.zimbabweflora.co.zw 2002) and in consultation with the herbaria deposited at BSI, Coimbatore it is identified as *Sesamum alatum* Thonn. It is distributed mainly in African countries, while Pullaiah *et al.* (2000) described the species in the Flora of Guntur District. Occurrence of the species in Kerala is reported for the first time. The detailed description and illustration are provided for its identification.

DESCRIPTION

Sesamum alatum Thonn. Schumacher & Beskr in Guin Pl. 284. 1827. Ramanujam & Joshi in J Bombay Nat Hist Soc 52:657.1954. *S. ekambaramii* Naidu., J Bombay Nat Hist Soc 52:698.1953. *S. sabulosum* A. Chev., Etud. Fl. Afr. Centr. Franc. 1:229. 1913.

Volkameria alata Thonn. Kuntze, Revis. Gen. Pl. 3:247. 1898. Plate. 1&2

Erect, annual herb, 46-100cm tall. Stem branched- basal branching, quadrangular, purplish green in colour, hairs sparse or weak. Leaves heteromorphic, lower leaves with 2.5-7cm long petiole, lamina 3-5 foliate, each lobes are narrow, linear-lanceolate, margin entire or undulate. Upper leaves simple with short petiole of 0.2 -0.5 cm long, glabrous, lamina 3-5 cm long, linear and narrow, margin entire. Purple coloured glands at the leaf axis. Flowers short pedicellate, solitary, bisexual and complete. Calyx deciduous, 5 sepals, polysepalous, lanceolate, linear, hairy and 4.2mm long. Corolla 3.1cm long, gamosepalous, hairy, exterior corolla is pink or light purple with reddish pink spotted within, obliquely campanulate and constricted at the base. Stamens 4, didynamous, epipetalous. Ovary bicarpellary, syncarpous and bilocular (tetralocular due to false septum); style medium, slender, purple colour; stigma bifid and purple. Fruit narrow oblong, long beaked loculicidal capsule one on each axis, 3-4 cm long. Seeds small, winged at both ends, black, rough, 2.5-3 mm long, foveolate.

Flowering and Fruiting: April-August

Ecological note: Usually in sandy soils, in road sides and in beach sides.

Specimen examined: India, Kerala, Kollam

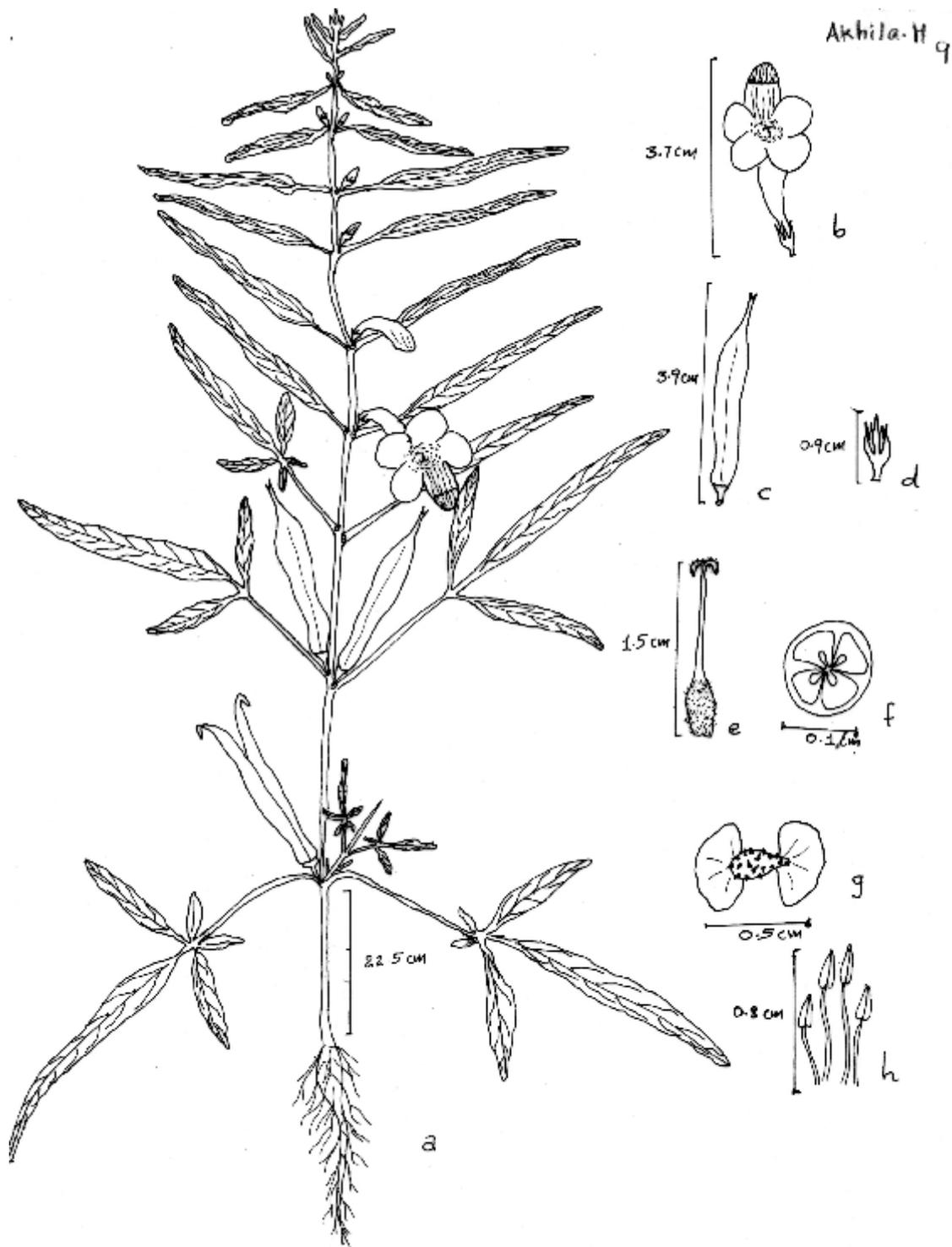


Plate 1 Figures (a-h)

a.Habit, b.Flower, c.Capsule, d.Calyx, e.Gynoecium, f. C.S. of ovary, g. Seed, h.Stamens.



Plate 2 Figures (a-c)

a. Habit, b. Capsule, c. Flower.

district, Kollam Beach ($8^{\circ}87'65.04''N$, $76^{\circ}59'22.38''E$), 13.5m, 6.6.2011.

Distribution

Widespread from tropical Africa to Namibia, South Africa and Arabian Peninsula (Ghazanfar2007). Now in Kerala from Kollam District.

The authors are grateful to the Director, Botanical Survey of India, Coimbatore for consultation and identification of the specimen. We are also thankful to Dr.Ashalatha S.Nair, Head and Professor, Department of Botany, University of Kerala for providing the facilities.

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