

## A NEW VARIETY OF *SONERILA SADASIVANII* NAYAR (MELASTOMATACEAE) FROM SOUTHERN INDIA

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### ABSTRACT

The new variety is described here with illustrations.

### INTRODUCTION

During the course of revision of the family Melastomataceae of India the authors observed some newly collected material from Tamil Nadu which were identified as *S. sadasivanii* Nayar. Critical studies reveal that though these new collections are closely allied to, but are sufficiently distinct from *S. sadasivanii* Nayar and, as such, can be well recognised as a variety under it.

***Sonerila Sadasivanii* Nayar var. *kanniyakumariensis* Giri et Nayar, var. nov.**

A typo differt, sed internodis brevioribus, 5-20 mm longis, floribus majoribus, calycis lobis late triangularis.

*Holotypus* : Henry 70380A (MH).

*Isotypi* : Henry 70380B & 70380C (MH).

*Paratypi* : *Vajravelu* 29119 (MH).

Small herbs, erect or decumbent, up to 50 cm tall, stem and branches strongly quadrangular, winged, woody, lower portion of branches and basal portion of stem often terete, internodes shorter, 5-20 mm long, reddish, glabrous. Leaves opposite decussate, elliptic, (2.0-) 3.5-6.0 (-8.0) × (0.8-) 1.5-2.5 (-3.0) cm, base acute to subrounded, apex acute, margin serrate, venation palmate, 5-7 nerved, all nerves arising from the base of lamina of which 3 nerves reach up to the top of the lamina, both surfaces glabrous,

glossy, often white spotted, thinly coriaceous or chartaceous, turn dull green on drying, petioles 1.5-4.0 cm long, glabrous. Inflorescence axillary or terminal scorpioid raceme, 4-16 flowered, peduncle red, quadrangular, shortly winged, 4-6 cm long, glabrous; bracts linear, subulate. Flowers 3-merous; pedicels 7-12 mm long (up to 20 mm in fruit), glabrous. Calyx tube campanulate, 5-7 × 2.5-3 mm, glabrous, lobes 3, broadly triangular, 0.75-1.0 × 2.0-2.5 mm, apex obtuse to rounded, glabrous, pinkish. Petals 3, obovate-oblong, 11-14 × 7-8.5 mm, pink in colour, prominently veined, glabrous. Stamens 3, filaments 5-7 mm long, anthers oblong, 5-6 mm long, abruptly narrowed into a short beak, base sagittate, pore 2, large, oblique. Style filiform, 10-13 mm long, stigma capitate. Capsules obconic, 8-10 mm long, acutely triangular, widened above, 6-ribbed. Seeds many, cuneate, 0.75-1.0 mm long, tuberculate on dorsal side.

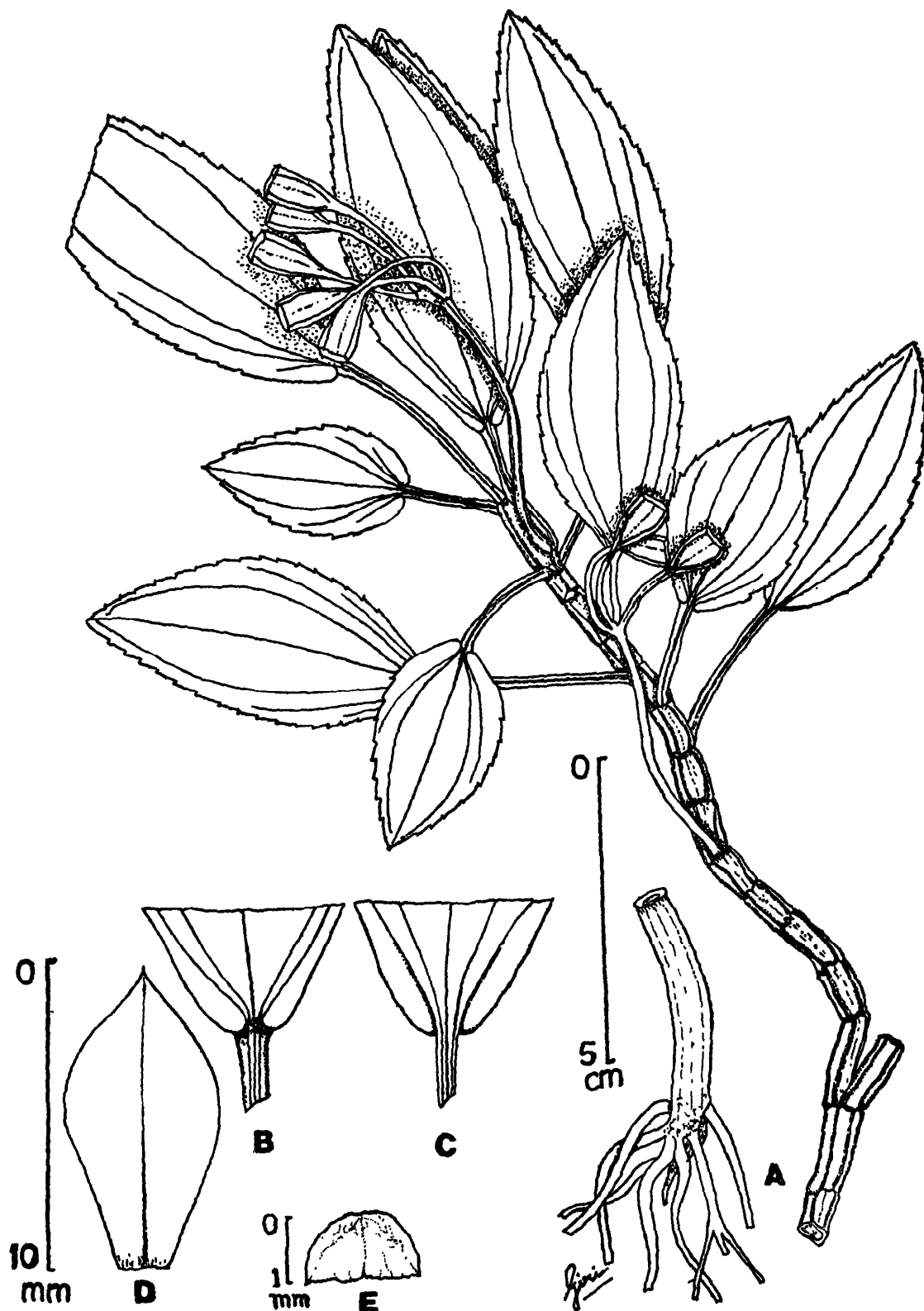
*Type* : Tamil Nadu, Kanniyakumari Dist., way to Vanamutti, ± 1400 m, 22.3.1981, A. N. Henry 70380A (Holotype, MH); *Ibid*, Henry 70380B & 70380C (Isotypes, MH); Tirunelveli Dist., Sengaltheri, 900 m, 19.9.1967, *Vajravelu* 29119 (Paratype, MH).

*Fls.* : Mar.-Apr. ; *Frts.* : May-Sept.

*Distrib.* : INDIA : Tamil Nadu, endemic.

*Notes* : This interesting new variety can be easily distinguished from *S. sadasivanii*

var. *sadasivanii* by its shorter internodes (5-20 mm long), larger pinkish flowers and broadly triangular calyx lobes ; whereas in *S. sadasivanii* var. *sadasivanii*, the internodes longer (30-50 mm long), smaller flowers and the calyx lobes triangular.



Figs. A-E : *Sonerila sadasivanii* var. *kanniyakumariensis* Giri & Nayar : A. Habit. B. & C. Leaf base (dorsal and ventral surface view respectively). D. Petal. E. Sepal.