

NOTES ON *HALOPHILA DECIPIENS* OSTENF. — A RARE PANTROPICAL MARINE ANGIOSPERM FROM BOMBAY COAST

During our last visit to Colaba shore behind Tata Institute of Fundamental Research for collection of sea-weeds on 7th April 1981, we came across the titled species growing in mud giving an appearance of a *Caulerpa* sp. Soon after we picked it up, from almost a knee-deep mud, we realised that it could be one of the marine angiosperm species. From the available literature the plant material was placed in genus *Halophila* Thouars. The genus *Halophila* is not represented in Blatter Herbarium and we found our material differed from the only species described by Dr. K. Subramanyam in his book entitled, 'Aquatic Angiosperms'.

Our herbarium material sent to Kew has been identified as *Halophila decipiens* Ostenf., a sea-grass widely distributed in tropical parts of the Indian and Pacific Ocean and in the Carribean sea. We find from literature that this species has been collected from Back-bay coast by S. C. Dixit, in 1928 and the specimens have been deposited in Kew. There is no description or diagram of this species available in any of the Indian botanical literature, so the present paper will be of much value. The data presented in this paper is based on our collections deposited in Blatter Herbarium and Herbarium of Institute of Science, Bombay.

***Halophila decipiens*** Ostenf. in Bot. Tidsskr. 24 : 260. 1902 (Plate I & Figs. 1-4.)

A submerged, monoecious, marine herb. Stem creeping, wiry, slender, giving one root at each node. Leaves one pair on each lateral shoot arising from the axil of a scarious or hyaline scale. Petiole slender, up to 16 mm long. Lamina oblong-elliptic, membranous, glossy green and glabrous, entire to the naked eye but serrulate under

magnification, 25-30 mm long and  $\pm 8$  mm broad, rounded at apex, cuneate at base, with prominent midrib. Intramarginal (more prominent) and lateral veins are inconspicuous but visible under magnification. Spathe consists of a pair of scarious, hyaline, serrulate bracts, enclosing one male

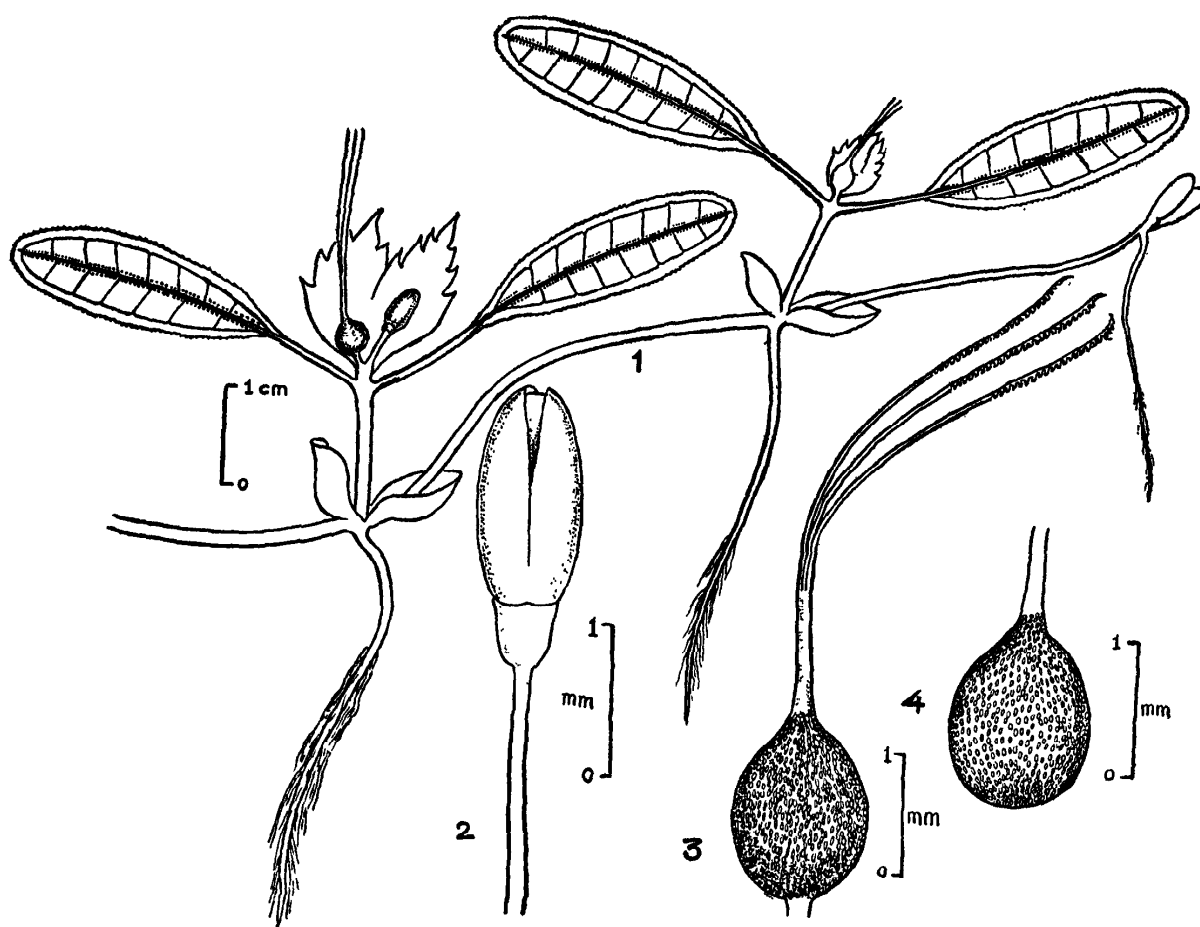


Plate : *Halophila decipiens* Ostenf.—Habit.

and one female flower. Pistillate flowers subsessile ; perianth 3, hyaline ; ovary ovoid, one-celled, long beaked, with many ovules on parietal placenta ; styles 3, filiform, papillose all over. Staminate flowers pedicellate ; perianth 3, hyaline ; anthers 3, sessile. Fruit sub-globose with stiff style base.

The plants were found completely submerged in sea water, even at low tide of magnitude of 0.3, partially embedded in mud.

*Exsiccata* : C. S. Lattoo, 6128 (H-ISC.), S. M. Almeida, SMA-A-121 (BLAT).



*Halophila decipiens* Ostenf.

Figs. 1-4 : 1. Habit. 2. Staminate flower. 3. Pistil. 4. Fruit.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We thank Messrs. M. R. Almeida, Alchemie Research Centre, Thane and R. L. Mitra, Botanical Survey of India, Calcutta, for help in preparation of this data.

S. M. ALMEIDA

Blatter Herbarium, St. Xavier's College, Bombay

AND

C. S. LATTOO

The Institute of Science, Bombay

#### ON THE OCCURRENCE OF *BLECHNUM PATERSONII* (R. BR.) METT. — A RARE FERN IN INDIA

While referring to the collections of Central National Herbarium in connection with studies on genus *Blechnum*, the authors came across three specimens from Sikkim ; two of them were collected by T. Thomson. One of them was named as *Lomaria* sp. while the other two were

named as *Lomaria patersonii* Spreng. by C. B. Clarke.

On closer examination all of them were found to be *Blechnum patersonii* (R. Br.) Mitt., so far known only from Nilgiris and Anamalai Hills of South India. Hence its occurrence in Sikkim Himalayas is interest-