

A NEW SPECIES OF CINNAMOMUM SCHAEFFER (LAURACEAE) FROM MALABAR

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ABSTRACT

The paper presents a new species of *Cinnamomum* (*C. nicolsonianum*) from Malabar region of India.

The genus *Cinnamomum* Schaeffer of Lauraceae consists of about 250 species (Willis, 1973). Kostermans (1964) lists 452 binomials, including synonyms, under this genus. Due to the wide variability in the morphological characters and the amazing uniformity of floral characters, a lot of confusion was prevailing in the taxonomy of this genus, which has been settled to a great extent recently by Kostermans (1983).

Apart from the introduced, cultivated species *C. verum* Bercht. & Presl, *C. camphora* (L.) Bercht. & Presl and *C. cassia* (L.) Bercht. & Presl, the most widely distributed species growing wild in Malabar is *C. malabatum* (Burm. f.) Bercht. & Presl. This is the "katou karua" of van Rheede (1685), the identity of which was in doubt for a long time. It was Kostermans (1980, 1983) who finally concluded that katou karua is *C. malabatum*. The specimens examined by Kostermans for this study (Kostermans 1983) were all from high elevations, collected from various localities of Western Ghats. During a detailed study of the Indian species of *Cinnamomum*, the present authors could collect a large number of specimens of a distinct *Cinnamomum* from many localities throughout Malabar, including the high elevation

regions of the Western Ghats. Although this specimen is allied to *C. malabatum*, it does not fit into any known species of the genus and is, hence, described as a new species here.

The species is named in honour of Dr. Dan H. Nicolson, Smithsonian Institution, for his valuable contributions to the study of the plants of peninsular India.

Cinnamomum nicolsonianum Manilal et Shylaja sp. nov.

Affinis *C. malabatum* (Burm. f.) Bercht. & Presl, sed in foliis oppositis sparse supra pilosis, paniculis parvi, axillaris, pauci-floris, usque ad 10 cm longis et tepalis 2-3 mm longis differt.

Typus: India, Shylaja CU 26217, 2-2-1980, Peruvannamuzhi (holotypus MH: isotypus CALI).

Allied to *C. malabatum* (Burm. f.) Bercht. & Presl, but differs from it by the opposite leaves which are sparsely hairy above; axillary, few-flowered, insignificant panicles up to 10 cm long; and the tepals being 2-3 mm long.

Moderate sized trees up to 15 m, leaves opposite, comparatively thin, moderately hairy on the under surface, sparsely hairy above, elliptic, large, 7-9 cm broad, 19-20 cm long, apex obtuse, base cuneate, three

main nerves prominent, starting from the base and running up to the apex; transverse nervules parallel and prominent especially on the under side; panicles axillary, much smaller than the leaves, up to 10 cm long; flowers borne towards the upper part of the long slender panicle; flowers few (15-30), pedicels short, tepals 2-3 mm long, tomentose (Figs. 1-7). Fruit characters similar to those of *C. malabatum*.

Holotype : India, Shylaja CU 26217, 2-2-1980, Peruvannamuzhi, is deposited in the Botanical Survey of India, Southern Circle Herbarium, Coimbatore (MH) and

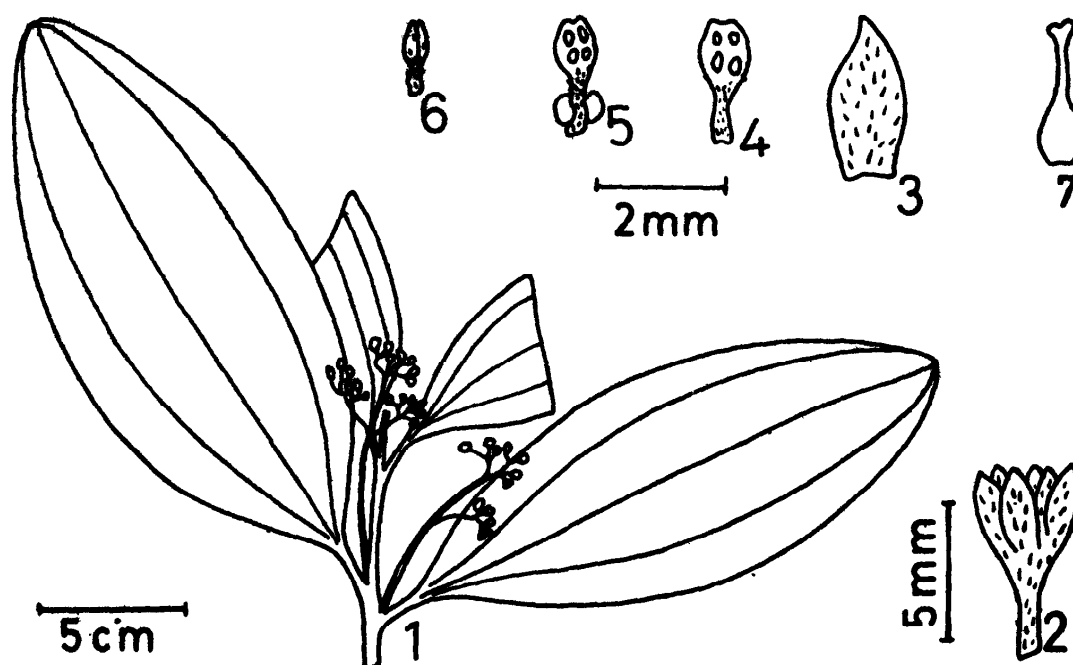
isotype in the Calicut University Herbarium (CALI).

While *C. malabatum* in general, can be easily identified when in bloom due to the large, showy panicles, in the case of *C. pauciflorum*, the inflorescence is so insignificant that one may not be able to judge whether the tree is in bloom or not without a close observation.

Common in the plains and foot hills of the Western Ghats of Kerala.

The two allied species can be easily distinguished from each other by the following characters :

	<i>C. malabatum</i>	<i>C. nicolsonianum</i>
Trees	Up to 20 m tall.	Up to 15 m tall.
Leaves	Opposite or sub-opposite. Glabrous above.	Opposite. Sparsely hairy above.
Panicles	Pseudo-terminal. Lax, many-flowered. Up to 25 cm long.	Axillary. Few-flowered. Up to 10 cm long.
Flowers	Many.	Few.
Tepals	3-3.5 mm long.	2-3 mm long.



Cinnamomum nicolsonianum Manilal et Shylaja, sp. nov.

Figs. 1-7 : 1. Flowering branch. 2. Single flower. 3. Perianth. 4. Stamen of 1st and 2nd whorl. 5. Stamen of 3rd whorl. 6. Staminode. 7. Pistil.

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