

HIBISCUS HETEROPHYLLUS VENT. — A NEWLY INTRODUCED ORNAMENTAL SHRUB FROM AUSTRALIA

R. D. DIXIT AND U. S. VAISH

Botanical Survey of India, Allahabad

ABSTRACT

Hibiscus heterophyllus Vent. has been introduced for the first time in India and is well established in the Experimental garden of Central Circle, Botanical Survey of India, Allahabad.

INTRODUCTION

Ten seeds were obtained from Royal Botanic Garden, Sydney (Australia) and sown on 22nd May, 1985. Out of ten seeds only two germinated by 25th June, 1985, thus only 20% germination took place. The plants were transplanted into ground in the last week of September, 1985 and soon well established in Allahabad climate. The whole plant is of ornamental nature, therefore, the detailed description, distribution, flowering and mode of propagation etc., are provided along with the illustrations here.

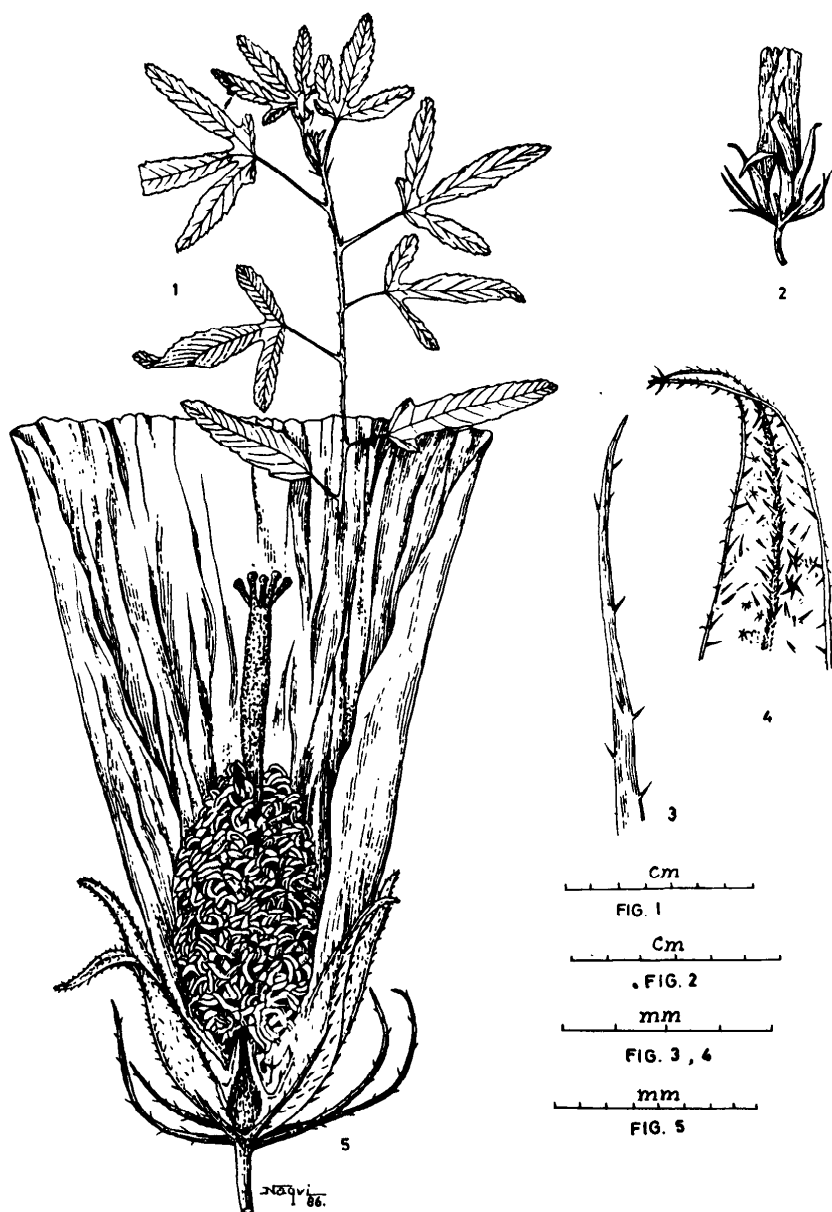
Hibiscus heterophyllus Vent. Jard. Malm. 2 : 103. t. 103. 1804; Benth; Fl. Aust. 1 : 212. 1863; Wilson, Aust. J. Bot. 22 : 170. f. 13. 1974. subsp. *heterophyllus* (Plate-I, figs. 1-5).

Perennial large shrub 1.5-2.5 m high or even small tree up to 6 m tall. *Stems* erect, glabrous, glaucous-green, aculeate to spinose throughout, spines small but sharp, branched more or less from the base, branches aculeate to spinose throughout. *Leaves* simple to 5-lobed, ovate to broadly elliptic-lanceolate or younger ones linear above, 5-20 × 0.5-8 cm, apex obtuse

to rarely acute, base cuneate to obtuse, margins distinctly serrate; pubescent beneath, hairs simple to star shaped, midrib sharp aculeate and hairy beneath; glabrescent on the upper surface; foliar nectary to 6 mm on dorsal surface of midrib. *Petioles* shorter on upper leaves but longer upto 6 cm on lower and mature leaves, pubescent ventrally, glabrous and aculeate dorsally. *Stipules* linear-filiform upto 7 mm, caducous. *Flowers* axillary, solitary, large 3-5 × 1-2 cm. Peduncles 6-30 mm long, accrescent, stellate pubescent, articulate at the base. *Epicalyx* 10 in number, linear lanceolate, 15-20 × 1-3 mm, pubescent with simple to stellate hairs, margins distinctly hairy. *Calyx* lobes ovate-lanceolate, 10-20 × 2-5 mm, exceeding epicalyx, simple to stellate pubescent, acuminate at apex. *Petals* large 4-6 × 1-2 cm, yellow with red-purple spot at the base, glabrous. *Staminal column* 15-25 mm, style exceeds staminal column 5-10 mm.

Flowering: December to March. *Fruits* did not form.

Distribution: Australia — Eastern Coast of New South Wales and Queensland.



Hibiscus heterophyllus Vent

Figs. 1—5 1 Part of branch showing simple to 5 lobed leaves. 2. A flower. 3. Apical part of epicalyx showing marginal hairs 4 Apical part of sepal. 5. An opened flower.

Propagation: The fruits did not form in Allahabad climate. Flowers fall off after 6-7 days of flowering. The cuttings have been tried and gave positive results. The plants can be easily multiplied through cuttings in India.

It is one of the beautiful perennial shrubs and holds a pride place in the garden.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We are grateful to Dr. M. P. Nayar, Director, Botanical Survey of India for encouragement and Curator, Royal Botanic Garden, Sydney for seeds. Thanks are also due to Sri S.M.A. Naqvi, Artist and Sri M. A. Siddiqui, Photographer of the circle for illustrations and photograph respectively.



Plate I : *Hibiscus heterophyllus* Vent. Part of the plant with flower.