

OXYTROPIS HYPOGLOTTOIDES (BAKER) ALI : A NEW RECORD FOR INDIA

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The genus *Oxytropis* DC. is represented in India by 15 species, most of which are confined to temperate-alpine Himalayas (Sanjappa, 1992). Recently a critical examination of a specimen collected from Hemis National Park in Ladakh region of Jammu & Kashmir revealed it to be identical to *Oxytropis hypoglottoides* (Baker) Ali, a species so far known from Russian Turkistan and Chitral in Pakistan (Ali, 1973; Kumar & Sane, 2003), in all the significant morphological details. It is rather interesting to note that while specimens collected from Turkistan and Pakistan did not bear fruits, their Indian counterparts bore mature pods. The characteristics of the fruit as well as seeds are, therefore, being described for the first time in this species.

The present communication provides an up to date nomenclature of the species along with detailed description, note on phenology, habitat and distribution. To facilitate its easy identification, the species has been suitably illustrated.

***Oxytropis hypoglottoides* (Baker) Ali** in Kew Bull. 28(2): 306. 1973. *Astragalus hypoglottoides* Baker in Hook.f., Fl. Brit. India. 2: 124. 1876. (Fig. 1)

Herbs, perennial, 7-30 cm high; stem elongated, branched, sparsely pubescent. Leaf imparipinnately compound; petiole 5-10 mm long, pubescent to semi-pilose; rachis 2-3.5 cm long, pubescent; petiolules less than 1 mm long; leaflets 9-19, opposite to sub-opposite, elliptic to lanceolate, 3-6 × 1-2 mm, rounded, acute to obtuse, entire, pilose on both the surfaces. Stipules leaf opposed, foliaceous, 4-5 mm long, glabrous above, pilose below, connate at the base. Inflorescence an axillary, pedunculate raceme; peduncles 25-50 mm long, pubescent; bracts lanceolate, 1-2 mm long. Flowers 2-4 mm across, shortly pedicellate; pedicels 1-1.5 mm long, black pubescent. Calyx 4-5 mm long, pubescent, hairs black and white, teeth 1-1.5 mm long. Corolla violet-purple; vexillum 7-8 × 4-4.5 mm, prominently veined; wing 7-8 × 1.5-2 mm prominently veined; keel 5.5-6 × 1.5-2 mm, shorter than wing and standard both, prominently veined, mucronate; mucro 0.2-0.3 mm long. Ovary stipitate, glabrous. Pods ovoid-lenticulate, 10-11 mm long, 4-5 mm broad, densely

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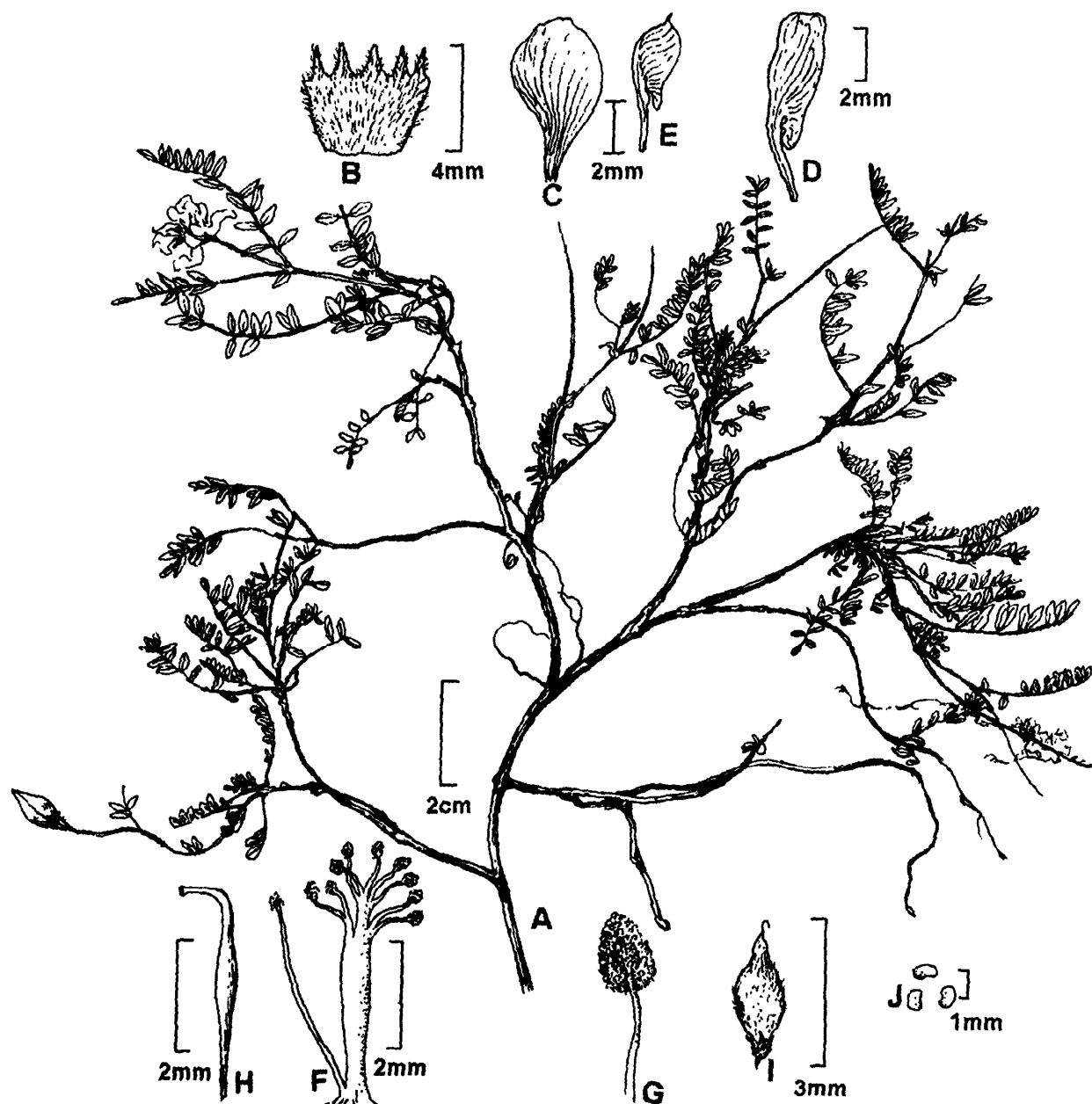


Fig. 1. A-J : *Oxytropis hypoglottoides* (Baker) Ali : A. Habit; B. Calyx; C. Vexillum; D. Wing; E. Keel; F. Androecium; G. Stamen; H. Pistil; I. Pod; J. Seeds.

pilose with black and white hairs when young, glabrous at maturity, stipitate; stipe 1-1.5 mm long; seeds 3-6, reniform, 1-1.5 mm long, 0.5-1 mm broad, yellowish brown, glabrous.

Fl. & Fr. : July August.

Frequent, among grasses along cultivated fields, on moist open slopes and sandy river beds.

Jammu & Kashmir: Hemis National Park, Spituk village, 22nd July 2002, S. K. Srivastava & Amit Chauhan 101042 (BSD); Pang, Rupshu, 4600 m, 2nd August 1970, U.C. Bhattacharyya 40982 (BSD); Himachal Pradesh: Spiti, Kibber Gette, 13th August, 1994, S. K. Murti & S. Singh 88286 (BSD).

Distribution : India (Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh); Pakistan; Turkistan.

Oxytropis hypoglottoides (Baker) Ali shows a close similarity with *O. lapponica* (Wahl.) Gay, but the latter differs from the former in having subtending leaf much shorter than the inflorescence, large, 2-2.5 mm long mucro of the keel and lateral calyx teeth up to 3 mm long. In recent collection the species was collected with fruiting specimens which also offers distinguishing characters between the two taxa. The fruits of *O. lapponica* have 8-10 seeds which are irregular in shape and reddish brown in colour, while those of *O. hypoglottoides* have 3-6, yellowish brown, reniform seeds.

O. hypoglottoides (= *Astragalus hypoglottoides* Baker) was instituted on the basis of the specimens collected by Dr. Handerson from Central Asian region during Yarkand Expedition (Baker, 1876; Lakshminarasimhan, *per lit.*). Subsequently, the species has also been recorded from Pamirs (Lakshminarasimhan, *per lit.*) and Chitral in Pakistan (Ali, 1977). Its present record from Jammu & Kashmir and Himachal Pradesh in India, therefore, extends its range of distribution to further East and South-east. The species seems to be very common in its Indian haunts, yet it is only sporadically collected probably because of its ephemeral nature.

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