



Lectotypification of *Dioscorea vexans* (Dioscoreaceae), an endemic and rare species from Andaman and Nicobar Islands, India

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Dioscorea Linnaeus (1753: 1032) is represented by ca. 616 species worldwide (eMonocot, 2015). Prain & Burkill (1936, 1938) reported ca. 50 species from India, while Karthikeyan *et al.* (1989) in their ‘Flora Indica Enumeratio: Monocotyledonae’ listed 30 species and 27 varieties. However, only 29 species and 2 varieties have been recognized now as the number of accepted taxa from India (eMonocot, 2015). During the course of herbarium consultation as part of a taxonomic study of the genus *Dioscorea* in the northern Western Ghats, we came across type specimens of *Dioscorea vexans* Prain & Burkill (1908: 456), housed at CAL, and also images of some of the type specimens in the Herbarium Catalogue, Kew (<http://specimens.kew.org/herbarium/K000098220>; K000098221 and K000098222). As no holotype was indicated by the authors in the protologue, and no lectotype has since been designated, the specimens are considered syntypes, and thus the name has to be lectotypified in accordance with Article 9.2 of the Melbourne Code (McNeill *et al.* 2012). The lectotype has been selected among the existing syntypes, and designated here for *D. vexans*.

Prain & Burkill (1908) described *D. vexans* (sect. *Enantiophyllum* Uline) based on collections from the Andaman Islands. The specimens listed in the protologue by the authors are: INSULAE ANDAMANICAE: Sine locis, Man, *Prainii mercenarius*, 25, 97; South Andaman, sine loco, *Heinig*, 314; Port Blair in collibus saxosis, *Kingii mercenarius*, 553, 569; Port Mouat in sylvis montosis, *Kingii mercenarius*; Bajajag valley, *Heinig*; Namuna ghar, *King*; Balughat, *Kingii mercenarius*; Baratang Island, *Rogers*. Further, the authors also stated in the protologue that “Typi in Herbario Horti Regalis ad Calcuttam conservati sunt,” i.e., the present day CAL. All the specimens are available at CAL and seen by the author (RSP). However, of the all syntypes, the three collections “Port Blair in collibus saxosis, *Kingii mercenarius*, 553, 569” and “Balughat, *Kingii mercenarius*” are also housed at K (vide the original label of “HERBARIUM HORTI CALCUTTENSIS” on the sheet).

Among the all syntypes, the specimen, S. Andamans, Balu Ghat, Hill Jungle, 24.9.1892, *Dr. King's Collector s.n.* [K000098221] at K (<http://specimens.kew.org/herbarium/K000098221>) has been selected here as the lectotype, as it bears the following annotation by Burkill, one of the original authors of the name, “notice the position of the lateral leaves and long inflorescence.” These are salient diagnostic features of the species and the same characters used by Prain and Burkill to distinguish *D. vexans* from its closely allied species, *D. glabra* Roxb. Furthermore, the specimen is complete and more representative than the other syntypes.

Dioscorea vexans Prain & Burkill (1908: 456). Lectotype (designated here):—INDIA. Andaman and Nicobar Islands: S. Andamans, Balu Ghat, Hill Jungle, 24.9.1892, *Dr. King's Collector s.n.* [K000098221, image!]. Fig. 1; Isolectotype CAL0000026180!

Acknowledgements

The authors are grateful to the Board of Trustees of Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, for permission to publish the image of the selected lectotype and to the authorities of CAL, for permission to consult the herbarium. The first author is thankful to UGC-RGNF (2013-14/RGNF-2013-14-SC-GOA-44299), for the financial assistance.