



***SALACCA SECUNDA* GRIFF. (ARECACEAE) : A NEW ADDITION TO THE FLORA OF WEST BENGAL, INDIA**

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Abstract

Salacca secunda Griff. (Arecaceae) is reported here as a new rattan species record for the flora of West Bengal, India. Updated nomenclature, detailed description, general distributions and necessary photographs are provided for the species.

Key Words: New record, Taxonomy, Phytogeography, Rattans.

Introduction

Genus *Salacca* Griff. (Arecaceae) is globally comprises of about 21 species are distributed in South and South East Asian countries of India, China, Burma, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Philippines and Myanmar (Renuka 2011). In India 4 species of *Salacca* are recorded and among them *Salacca secunda* Griff. is widely distributed in eastern states of Assam, Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh and Nagaland (Hooker *f*, 1894; Basu 1992; Basu & Mondal 2013; Mondal, Basu & Chowdhury 2017, 2018, 2019; Mondal & Chowdhury 2018, 2019), rest three species are found under cultivation in different conservatories of India (Basu & Chakraverty 1994). North Bengal plains, hills and foothills of Terai and Duars are situated within the boundary of Himalayan Biodiversity Hotspots that is quite rich in various types of biological entities and during the floristic survey (2013–2018) of palm from these areas an interesting specimen of *Salacca* were collected from the Dalgaon forest range of district Alipurduar of North Bengal and only 3 bushes were noted there. Extensive herbarium consultation (CAL, BSHC and ASSAM) and literature review revealed no records of this species from the boundary of West Bengal. Few healthy seedlings are carefully growing in the Centre of Conservation and Utilization of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants (*ex-situ* conservatory), University of North Bengal.

Salacca secunda Griff., Cal. J. Nat. Hist. 5: 12. 1845; Fuetado in Gard., J. Singapore 12: 378.1949; Basu

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and Chakraverty, Manu. Cult. Palms in Ind. 80. 1994. Fig. 1.

Plant acculecent, busy rattans. *Leaves* pinnate 8–10 m long, petiole coverd with dense, rusty indumentums; leaflets alternate, coriaceous, groups of 2–4 on each side of the rachis on lower part; upper part of the rachis unarmed, trigonous, straight, leaflets lanceolate, distinctly 3 nerved, bristly spinous on upper nerves; middle leaflets 70–95 cm long, 4–7 cm broad; lower leaflets very short, narrow. *Male inflorescence* on robust axis, bracts and prophyll covered with rusty indumentums, acuminate, lanceolate, primary branches very long, each bearing rachillae, rachilla coming out from the opening of fertile bract, each 5–9 cm long; flowers 6–8 mm long, exerted from the bracts, calyx deeply 3 lobed, corolla little longer than calyx, divided into 3 segments, stamens 6, anthers linear oblong. *Female inflorescence* less branched; flowers ovoid, calyx membranous, 3 lobed, corolla leathery, ovary 3 celled. Fruit obovoid, 3–4 cm in diameter, pericarp thin, scales dark brown, 5–11 mm long, 2–4 mm broad at base.

Flowering: March – April **Fruiting:** August – September

Status: Rare occurrence

Distribution: India (Assam, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh and now in West Bengal), China, Myanmar, Thailand, China, Malaysia to Indonesia; less common in the forests of Duars (Dalgaon forest) of Northern West Bengal.

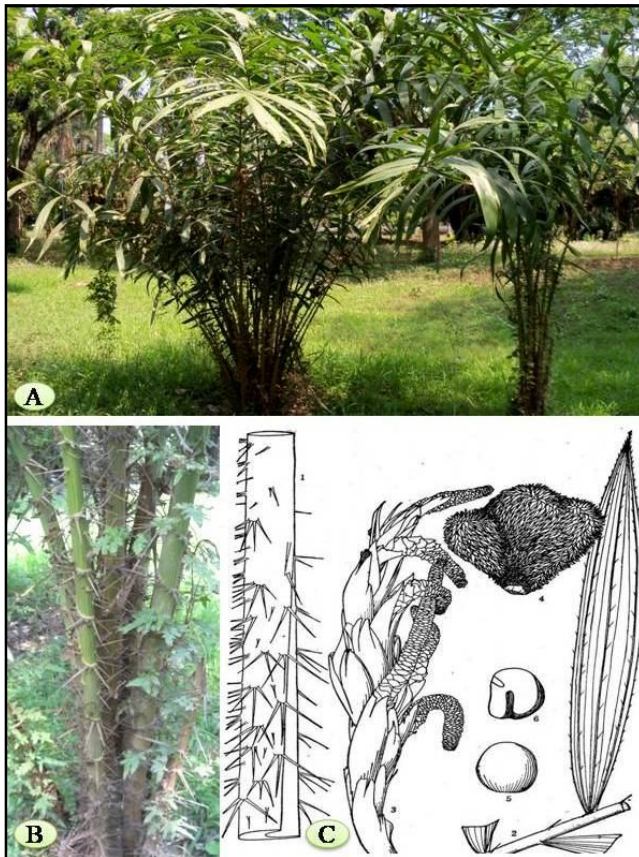


Fig. 1: A. Habit of *Salacca secunda* Griff. - B. Spine ornamentation of *S. secunda* - C. Illustration of *S. secunda* (1. Petiole 2. Leaflet 3. Inflorescence 4. Fruit 5. Seed 6. Ovule © SK Basu).

Specimen Examined: West Bengal, Birpara, Dalgaon forest range 20.08.2016 Mondal and Chowdhury, 1035 (Acc. No. 10690, NBU).

Uses: Fruits are edible; the leaves are commonly used for thatching.

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