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A new species of *Mnesithea* Kunth (Poaceae) from India

G. G. Potdar¹, S. P. Gaikwad¹, C. B. Salunkhe² & S. R. Yadav³

Summary. A new species of *Mnesithea*, *M. veldkampii* (Poaceae) is described and illustrated from Maharashtra, India.

The genus *Coelorachis* Brongn. has been reduced to *Mnesithea* Kunth. (Veldkamp *et al.* 1986). The genus *Mnesithea* is distributed throughout the tropics. As now defined the genus *Mnesithea* in the world is represented by about 32 species (Veldkamp *et al.* 1986), and in India by about 6 species (Bor 1960: 120–121, 159–160, 197; Karthikeyan *et al.* 1989: 238–239; Moulik 1997: 185), mostly found in the warmer parts of the country. Three species of *Mnesithea*, *M. clarkei* (Hack.) de Koning & Sosef, *M. granularis* (L.) de Koning & Sosef, and *M. laevis* (Retz.) Kunth have been recorded for Maharashtra State (Sharma *et al.* 1996: 538–540). An extensive field survey of the grasses of the state has resulted in the discovery of a new species, which is described and illustrated here.

***Mnesithea veldkampii* Potdar, Gaikwad, Salunkhe & S. R. Yadav sp. nov.** *Mnesithea laevis* similis, sed ligula glabra, spatheolis ad 18 (non 6.5) cm longis, spicis 5–20 (non 2.5–10) cm longis, spiculis sessilibus internodiis 0.5–1 mm longioribus (non 0.5–1 mm brevioribus), lemmatis paleisque enervatis (non valde nervatis), pedicellis internodiis liberis (non adnatis), spiculis pedicellatis valde evolutis dorsoventraliter appianatis 4.8–5 mm (non lateraliter compressis 0.2–0.4 mm) longis differt. Typus: India, Maharashtra, Mawashi Plateau (Satara Distr.), Yadav 1466 (holotypus CAL; isotypi BSI, Blatt, K, Shivaji University Herbarium).

Perennial. Culms compressed, erect, 30–150 cm high, branching extravaginally at the base with ovate to ovate-oblong cataphylls, 2 × 0.5 cm; nodes glabrous. Leaf sheath compressed, 5–20 cm long, margin glabrous; ligule membranous, 1.4–1.5 mm

long. Leaf blade linear, folded, 5–60 × 0.1–0.2 cm, glabrous, strongly keeled, acuminate. Spatheoles 18 cm long. Raceme solitary, terminal, 5–20 cm long; joints terete, linear-clavate, 4–5 mm long, glabrous; spikelets paired. Sessile spikelets about as long as or longer than the joint, ovate, 5–5.5 × 2–2.2 mm (including callus); callus glabrous. Lower glume coriaceous, ovate, flat, 5–5.4 × 1.5–1.7 mm, 2–3-nerved, 1-keeled, acute. Upper glume boat-shaped, coriaceous, narrowly ovate, glabrous, 5–5.4 × 1.5–1.7 mm long, 2–3-nerved, 1-keeled, nerves not anastomosing, margins inflexed, apex acute. Lower lemma membranous, narrowly ovate, 4.5–4.6 × 1.2–1.4 mm, nerveless, margins inflexed, acute, epaleate. Upper lemma membranous, narrowly ovate, 4–4.2 × 1.2–1.4 mm, nerveless, 1-keeled, margins inflexed, acute. Palea membranous, narrowly ovate, 3.8–4 × 1.4–1.5 mm, nerveless, margins inflexed, obtuse. Stamens 3, anthers 3.4–3.5 × 0.8–0.9 mm. Lodicules 2, cuneate. Ovary 0.6–0.7 × 0.4–0.5 mm. Caryopsis elliptic, 2.8–3 × 1.5–1.7 mm. Pedicels free from the joint, compressed, linear-clavate, 4.5 mm long, glabrous. Pedicelled spikelets narrowly obovate, 4.8–5 × 1.5–1.6 mm, glabrous. Lower glume coriaceous, narrowly ovate, 4.8–5 × 1.5–1.6 mm, 7–9-nerved, 1-keeled, margins inflexed, obtuse. Upper glume coriaceous, narrowly ovate, 4.8–5 × 1.2–1.4 mm, 2–3-nerved, 1-keeled, margins inflexed, acute. Lower lemma membranous, narrowly ovate, 4.5–4.6 × 1.1–1.2 mm, nerveless, margins inflexed, acute, epaleate. Upper lemma membranous, narrowly ovate, 3.8–4 × 0.8–0.9 mm, nerveless, obscurely 1-keeled, margins inflexed, acute. Palea membranous, narrowly elliptic, 3.8–4 × 0.8–0.9 mm, nerveless, margins inflexed, obtuse. Stamens 3, anthers 2.5–2.6 × 0.3–0.4 mm. Lodicules 2, cuneate. Fig. 1.

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Abstract

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