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Two new records of Grasses for Maharashtra, India

While exploring the grass diversity of Nagpur division of Maharashtra, one of authors (ST) collected grass specimens from Butibori and Gadhavi riverbank, on critical study were identified as *Eragrostis zeylanica* Nees et Mey. and *Saccharum griffithii* Munro ex Boiss, by following available literature (Nees and Meyen, 1841; Hooker, 1897; Bor, 1940; Bor, 1960; Sreekumar and Nair, 1991). The perusal of relevant literature revealed that these two grasses were not reported from Maharashtra State (Hooker, 1897; Cooke, 1908; Blatter and McSann, 1935; Bor, 1960; Potdar *et al.*, 2012; Kellogg *et al.*, 2020) and hence reported here as a new addition to the grasses of Maharashtra. Detailed description and photo plates are provided to facilitate easy identification. Voucher specimens are deposited at the herbarium of the Department of Botany, Shivaji University, Kolhapur (SUK).

Systematic Treatment

Eragrostis zeylanica Nees, C.G.D. Nees von Esenbeck, Gramineae: 72: 1841; Bor, Fl. Assam 5: 102. 1940; Bor, Grass. Bur. Cey. Ind. Pak. 515. 1960; Karth., S.K. Jain, M.P. Nair and Sanjappa, Fl. Ind. Enum. Monocot. 218. 1989; Nair and Ramach., Bull. Bot. Surv. Ind. 22: 193. 1980 (1982). Sreek. and V.J. Nair, Fl. Kerala Grass. 394. 1991; S. Moulik, Grass. Bam. India 2: 611. 1997. *E. elongata* sensu Stapf, Hook. f., Fl. Brit. India 7: 319. 1897, non Jacq. 1813 (Fig. 1).

Type: SRI LANKA, July 1829, *Macrae J.* s.n. in Herb. Lindley, Herb. Arnott (holo CGE, picture K; iso BM [BM000959507, image!]).

Densely tufted perennials. Culms, 5 – 35 cm high, sub-erect or prostrate from geniculate base; nodes glabrous, brownish; internodes ca. 4 cm long. Leaf sheaths 2–6 cm long, keeled, involute, ciliate towards collar. Leaf Blade linear-lanceolate, 4 – 8 × 0.2 – 0.3 cm, rounded at base, narrow, erect, flat or rolled, often rigid, adaxially hirsute towards the base, attenuate to a fine point; sheaths striate, ca. 2 cm long, smooth, throat bearded, without auricles. Ligules fimbriate, thin, membranous. Panicles oblong or ovate-oblong, upto 15 cm long, spreading, sometime contracted; central axis slender, straight, glabrous, smooth or slightly scabulose

on angle; branches solitary, 0.5–1 mm long, simple or branched, scabulose. Spikelets very shortly pedicelled, crowded, oblong to lanceolate, 2 – 3 (-4) mm wide, sharply acute, 15 – 30 (-40)-flowered greyish or dark-brown; rachis somewhat robust, rigid, smooth, persistent. Lower glume lanceolate, 1 – 1.5 × 0.3 – 0.5 mm, chartaceous, keeled, 1-nerved, acuminate at apex. Upper glume ovate-lanceolate, 1 – 1.3 × ca. 0.5 mm, coriaceous, keeled, 3-nerved, acuminate at apex. Lemmas ovate-lanceolate, 1.5 – 2.5 × 1 – 1.5 mm, coriaceous to chartaceous with hyaline margins, keeled, 3-nerved, subacute to acuminate at apex. Paleas elliptic-oblong, slightly curved, 1 – 1.5 × 0.5 – 1 mm, scabrid, persistent, 2-keeled, 2-nerved, ciliate along the keels. Rachilla wavy, c. 0.5 mm long, glabrous. Lodicules 2, c. 0.2 mm long, obovate. Stamens c. 0.25 mm long, anthers 3. Caryopsis c. 5 × 4.5 mm, ovoid to globular or sub-globular, terete to laterally compressed, light brown

Flowering and Fruiting: September – January

Occurrence: Rare along stream banks and marshy places.

Distribution: India [Andaman Is., Assam, Kerala, Karnataka, Meghalaya, Nagaland and Maharashtra (Nagpur)], Australia, China, Myanmar, Taiwan and Sri Lanka.

Specimen Examined: Maharashtra: Nagpur district, Butibori (20°54'49.9"N 78°59'58.9"E), 258m. 25th September 2020, *Swati Tathod* SST905 (SUK).

Note: *Eragrostis zeylanica* often confused with *E. cumingii* and *E. brownii* but can be identified with its short spreading habit, less fascicled spikelets and short pedicel

Saccharum griffithii Munro ex Boiss., Fl. Orient. (Boisser) 5: 453. 1884; Blatt and McCann, The Bombay Grass. 49: 1935; Bor, Grass. Bur. Cey. Ind. Pak. 211. 1960. *Erianthus griffithii* Hook. f., Fl. Brit. India 7: 122, 1897 (Fig. 2).

Type: AFGHANISTAN: Kuram District, on the arid shingle plains and borders of fields, upto 6000 ft. "Hab. ad Schah Bilawul Afghaniae"; *Griffi* exs. 507.