

A Note on the Distribution of *Parthenium hysterophorus* L. in the Trongsa District of Bhutan

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Abstract

The extension of distribution of *Parthenium hysterophorus* L. (Asteraceae) in the Trongsa District of Bhutan has been recorded and discussed.

Keywords: *Parthenium hysterophorus*, Trongsa, Bhutan, Flora

On 27th October 2007 we left Gelephu (the international boarder checkpoint with Assam in India) for Trongsa at 10-30 hrs. (Indian time). The distance between Gelephu and Trongsa (the Head Quarter for Trongsa District of Bhutan) is 254 km through the hills. The road is passing mostly through the dense natural forests and the human settlements are quite sparse. However, on the slope-side a 1 – 3 m broad area is kept cleaned/ pruned.

After crossing 140th km mile-stone, on the cleaned road-side, we marked the occurrence of a small population of *Parthenium hysterophorus* L. (Asteraceae). Plants are growing sparsely and are not quite healthy, upto 50 cm tall with few branches and capitula. But the patch is continued up to 148th km along the road-side only. No where the plant was seen spreading away from the road-side. A good proportion of plants are young and yet to produce flowers.

The sun was set by that time, and plants were no more visible during this onward journey.

For our return journey, we left the town of Trongsa on 30th October at 6-00 hrs. (Indian time). This time, again, we maintained our curiosity on the occurrence of *P. hysterophorus* along the rout. After crossing 208 km post we spotted only few individuals of the species. The altitude is slowly decreasing. And, we noticed that the plant is occurring here up to 202 km post. The highest number of plants was found at a small hamlet called Langthel, where the species has nicely established itself and is spreading slowly along the crop-fields. However, the total number of plants recorded here is around 150 individuals. Interestingly, local people recognise the plant as '*Parthenium*'.

We continued our search along the entire rout. Revisited the earlier site and upto Gelephu (in the tropical plains) it was not noticed at any other place.

As it appears the species has introduced accidentally along with different materials and is trying to establish itself in this subtropical to temperate hill region. The area is extremely rich in biodiversity and if this troublesome exotic weed spreads laterally in side the natural vegetation it may interfere with the survival of several local Bhutanese species in the Himalaya Hotspot. Grierson & Springate (2001) reported the occurrence of this species in Trongsa and the present observation is exposing its peculiar distribution pattern.

LITERATURE CITED

- Grierson, A.J.C. & Springate, L.S. 2001. Family 187. Compositae (Asteraceae). In *Flora of Bhutan*, eds. A.J.C. Grierson & D.G. Long. 2(3): 1622.