

***Aspidopterys wallichii* Hook.f. (Malpighiaceae): a new record for Eastern Himalaya**

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Abstract

Aspidopterys wallichii Hook.f. (Malpighiaceae) is known to grow in the subtropical regions of Punjab, Kumaon and Garwal Himalayas which is now reported to grow in Sikkim. It is also the first report of the species from Eastern India including Eastern Himalaya. Detailed description and illustration of the species has been provided.

The genus *Aspidopterys* A. Jussieu (Malpighiaceae) is a tropical Asiatic genus with 15 species, of which five have been recorded for India in the *Flora of British India* by J.D. Hooker (1878). So far, only two of its species, *A. nutans* Hook.f. and *A. glabriuscula* A. Jussieu, were known to grow in Eastern Himalaya or in Eastern India. *A. roxburghiana* A. Jussieu, which is also recorded for this area by Hooker (l.c.) is now treated synonymous to *A. glabriuscula* A. Jussieu.

Aspidopterys wallichii Hook.f. is known to grow in the subtropical regions of Punjab, Siwalik hills of Uttar Pradesh and in Kumaon and Garwal Himalayas. During the present survey of angiospermic climbers in Darjeeling and Sikkim Himalayas, this species has been collected from two places in Sikkim (North of River Teesta), which is also the first record of the species from Eastern Himalaya and for Eastern India. The detailed description and illustration is given below to assist in easy identification of the species.

Aspidopterys wallichii Hook.f. in Fl. Brit Ind. 1: 421. 1878; Duthie, Fl. of Upper Gang. Plain 1: 118. 1960 (rep. of B.S.I); N.C. Nair, Fl. of the Punjab Plains in Rec. B.S.I. 21(1): 47. 1978; Parker, For. Fl. Punjab (3rd. edn.) 57. 1984. [Fig. 1].

A twining shrub with terete, woody, tomentose stem; hairs spreading shortly stalked at the middle, young shoot rusty hairy, internodes upto 15 cm long. Leaves exstipulate; petiole 2.0-3.0 cm long, terete with appressed silky tomentum, lamina 9.0-14 x 4.0-8 cm, broadly ovate, entire, acuminate to caudate, base rounded to subcordate, herbaceous, glabrous above, white silky tomentose beneath, lateral nerves 7-9, alternate. Bracts 0.1-0.15 cm long, subulate, green, silky-tomentose, panicles terminal in pendulous branches, oppositely branched peduncle 8.0-10 cm long, tomentose, pedicels 1.0-1.6 cm long; sepals 5, 0.2-0.4 cm long, broadly ovate-oblong, entire, green, white-tomentose inside; petals 5, 0.3-0.4 cm, creamy-white, obovate-oblong, entire, rounded, glabrous; stamens 8 in a ring of c 0.2 cm diameter, filaments c 0.15 cm long, glabrous, erect; anther c 0.1 cm long; ovary 0.2x 0.3 cm; styles 3, c 0.2 cm long, erect, stigma curved, spatulate. Fruits of 3 winged samaras, pale-yellow 2.5-3.2x2.0-2.5 cm, broadly elliptic to orbicular to oblong, white-appressed tomentose, hilum lanceolate, distinct, upto 1.0 cm long.

Flowers: July – September; **Fruit ripening:** September – October

Distribution: Punjab, Siwaliks in Uttar Pradesh, Garwal, Kumaon and Eastern Himalaya

Specimen examined: Rishi, Sikkim, 910 m, September 06, 1996, *Das et Samanta 1370* (CAL; NBU); Mangan, 1320 m, September 24, 1996; *Das et Samanta 1431* (NBU; BSHC).

Note: Only two plants recorded so far, both are from the place situated North of River Teesta, growing in open forests.

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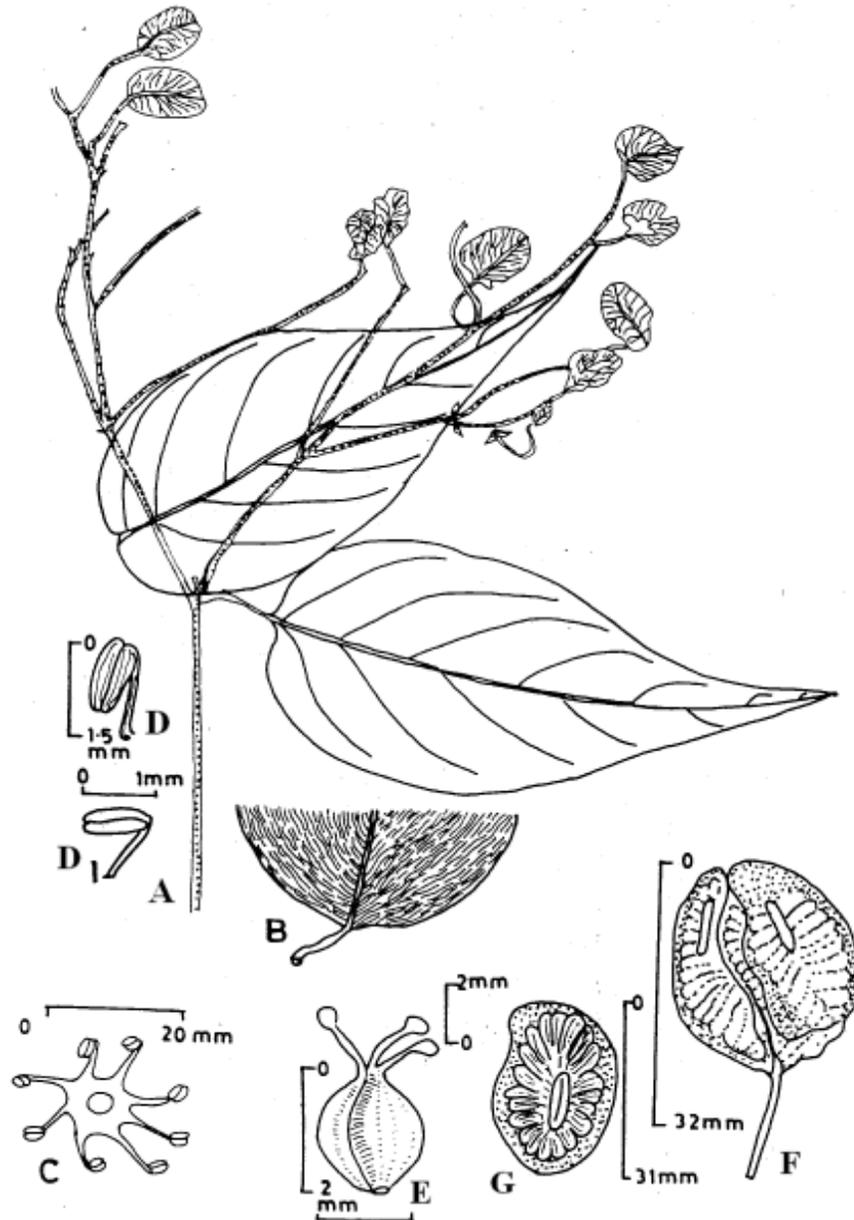


Fig. 1. A - G: *Aspidopterys wallichii* Hook.f.: A. a twig; B. undersurface of lower part of leaf; C. androecium; D. a stamen; E. pistil; F. a fruit; G. a part of the samara.