

***Hypoestes phyllostachya* Baker (Acanthaceae): a new record for West Bengal, India**

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Abstract

The occurrence of *Hypoestes phyllostachya* Baker (Acanthaceae) has been recorded for the first time from West Bengal state. Detailed description along with a photograph is provided.

Key words: *Hypoestes phyllostachya*; New record; Mahananda Wildlife Sanctuary, West Bengal.

While working on the plant resources of Mahananda Wildlife Sanctuary located in the Darjeeling district of West Bengal, an interesting plant species has been collected from Sukna Forest Range. After a critical study in herbarium and literature, it is identified as *Hypoestes phyllostachya* Baker of [Acanthaceae]. This species was originally described from Madagascar and is also distributed in North America. Recently Remadevi & Binoj Kumar (2001) recorded this species from the State of Kerala as an addition to the Flora of India. A perusal of literature revealed that it has not yet been reported from West Bengal. The species is now found naturalized in many parts of Darjeeling Hills. Therefore the present finding of this species forms a new record for West Bengal state from Darjeeling district. Probably introduced as an ornamental and subsequently naturalized at different places.

Full citation, brief description, reference to illustration along with a photograph with relevant notes is given here for ready reference and easy identification.

Hypoestes phyllostachya Baker in J. Linn.Soc. 22: 511. 1887; Remadevi & Binoj Kumar in J. Econ. Taxon. Bot. 25 (3): 621-622. fig.1 (A – E), 2001. [Fig. 1]

Perennial decumbent herbs, up to 1m high; young stems and branches terete or angled, sparsely pubescent, glabrescent. Lamina elliptic-ovate, 1.5 – 7.2 × 0.5 – 3.5 cm, entire or wavy, acute, base acute to obtuse, glabrous, stone cells on both surfaces, variegated with pinkish spots; petioles 1 – 4.5 cm long, slender, pubescent. Flowers in spikes or solitary, axillary; bracts 4, free to the base, lobes spathe-like, unequal, 2 pointed, other 2 obovate, 1 – 1.7 × 0.1 – 0.2 cm, hirsute, dark green. Flowers 1 – 2 within the bract. Sepals 5, lanceolate, shorter than bracts, hirsute at tip. Corolla tube narrow towards base, 0.7 × 0.1 cm, dilated and curved, bilabiate, upper lip 3-lobed, 0.9 × 0.5 cm, lower lip 2-lobed, 1 – 1.2 × 0.1 cm, pubescent on the dilated and lower part of lobes. Stamens 2, filaments 0.7 - 0.9 cm long, hairy, anther lobes yellow. Ovary 0.2 × 0.1 cm, oblong, glabrous; style 1.7 – 1.9 cm long; stigma slightly bifid, disc membranous, 4 – 5 lobed, white. Capsules elongate, 0.3 – 0.4 × 0.1 cm, puberulous. Seeds 4, glabrous.

Flowering & Fruiting: November – March.

Ecology: Grows in hill slopes, nearby river.

Distribution: India: Kerala, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal; Madagascar, North America.

Exsiccatae: West Bengal: Sukna, 22.11.2006, T.K. Paul & Anant Kumar 41206 (CAL); Soom TE, AP Das & Chandrâ 3411, dated 12.10.2004 (NBU); Makaibari TE, AP Das & Chandrâ 1778, dated 17.05.2003 (NBU); Tamsong TE, AP Das & Chandrâ 2149, dated 30.06.2003 (NBU). Tamilnadu: Eastern ghats, Shevaroy hills, 05.10.2003, Sk. Nazeevuddin 24868 (CAL).

Notes: According to Remadevi & Binoj Kumar (*l. c.*) bracts are jointed about the terminal end but in our specimens bracts are connate towards the base.



Fig. 1: A flowering twig of *Hypoestes phyllostachya* Baker

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