

## ***Oplismenus undulatifolius* (Arduino) P. Beauvois [Poaceae]: a new record for West Bengal, India**

**Saurav Moktan, Suman Nirola and A. P. Das**

Taxonomy & Environmental Biology Laboratory, Department of Botany, University of North Bengal,  
Siliguri 734013, West Bengal, India.

E-mails: sa\_mok@rediffmail.com; apdas.nbu@gmail.com

### **Abstract**

*Oplismenus undulatifolius* (Arduino) P. Beauvois (Poaceae) has been reported for the first time from West Bengal (Darjiling Hills). A detailed description and illustration of this temperate grass have been provided for its easy identification.

**Key words:** *Oplismenus undulatifolius*, Poaceae, new record, West Bengal

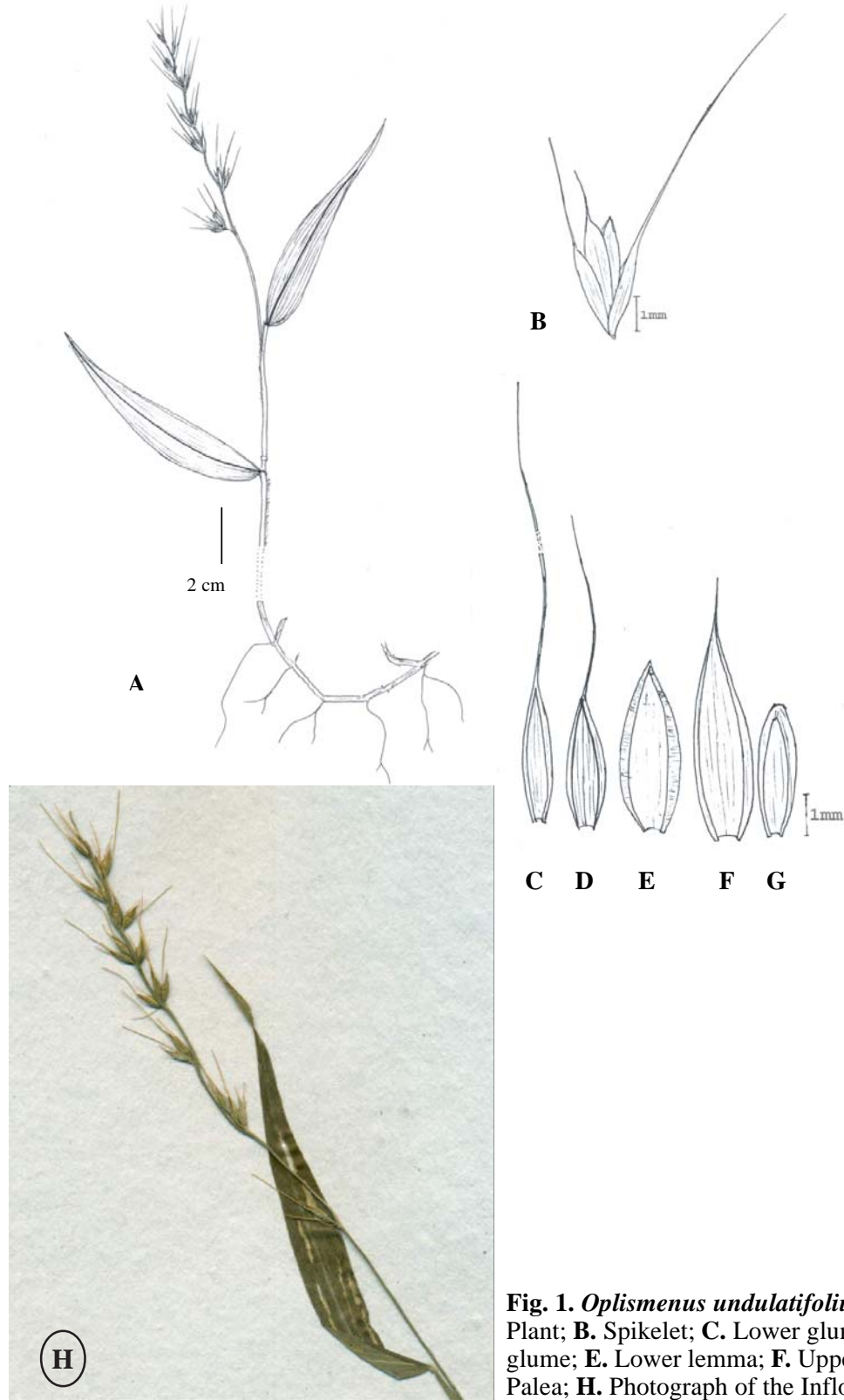
The genus *Oplismenus* P. Beauvois (Poaceae) is a small genus of annual or perennial grasses of tropical – temperate zones. Mabberley (2005) recognized 7 species for *Oplismenus* distributed in tropical and warmer areas of the world. According to Scholz (1981) the genus has 9 species and 18 infraspecific taxa out of which three species have been recorded for Indian territory in the *Flora of British India* (Hooker 1896). So far, only two of its species *O. compositus* (Linnaeus) P. Beauvois and *O. burmannii* (Retzius) P. Beauvois were known to grow in West Bengal including Terai, Duars and the Darjiling part of the Eastern Himalaya (Hara 1966; Das & Chanda 1987; Noltie 2000).

*Oplismenus undulatifolius* (Arduino) P. Beauvois is known to grow in the warm-temperate regions of the northern hemisphere, extending southward on the uplands of Africa, South Africa, India (Davey & Clayton 1978), Bhutan and Nepal (Hara *et al* 1978; Noltie 2000). *O. undulatifolius* is sometimes considered synonymous with *O. hirtellus* (Linnaeus) P. Beauvois (Scholz 1981).

During the present survey of angiospermic flora in Darjiling, this species has been collected from Sepoydhura, near Kurseong, at an altitude of 1636 m, which is also the first record of the species from the Darjiling part of the Eastern Himalaya that forms the northernmost part of the Indian state of West Bengal. In the Eastern Himalayan region previously it was known to grow between 2100 to 2700 m amsl (Hara *et al* 1978; Hajra & Verma 1996; Noltie 2000). The present record of the species from 1636 m is also a record for its downward migration that too in Kurseong region where the average ambient temperature generally remains little higher than a locality of similar altitude in Sikkim. A detailed description and illustration of the plant are given below to assist its easy identification.

***Oplismenus undulatifolius* (Arduino) P. Beauvois, Ess. Agrost. 54. 1812; Hooker f., Fl. Brit. India 7: 66. 1896; Bor, Grass. Burma, Ceylon, India & Pakistan 318. 1960; Hara, Stearn & William, Enum. Fl. Pl. Nepal 1: 138. 1978; Hajra & Verma, Fl. Sikkim 1: 261. 1996 ; Noltie, Fl. Bhutan 3(2): 686. 2000. *Panicum undulatifolium* Arduino, Animad. Spec. Alt. 14: t. 4. 1764. [Fig. 1]**

Perennial herbs. Culms stoloniferous, decumbent at base, rooting from lower nodes, 20 – 50 cm tall. Leaf: lamina slightly ovate-lanceolate, 4.5 – 11 × 0.7 – 1.3 cm, margin entire-thickened, finely acuminate, both surfaces moderately pubescent, base unequally sub-rounded; sheaths



**Fig. 1.** *Oplismenus undulatifolius*: **A.** Entire Plant; **B.** Spikelet; **C.** Lower glume; **D.** Upper glume; **E.** Lower lemma; **F.** Upper lemma; **G.** Palea; **H.** Photograph of the Inflorescence

smooth to sparsely hispid, open, 1 – 5.5 cm, margins long ciliate; ligule 0.5 – 0.8 mm, densely ciliate; cilia  $\pm$ 0.5 mm. Panicle axis erect, 5 – 10 cm, glabrous or minutely hispid; 3 – 6 spikelets in 5 – 10 clusters at nodes; lower ones often with 1–2 mm long stalks, some fertile spikelets solitary along with one awn representing the sterile spikelet; Spikelets lanceolate, 3.5 – 4 mm, hispidulous; glumes unequally awned; lower glume 2.5 – 3 mm, lanceolate, hispid on veins, awns 12 – 14 mm; upper glume elliptic, 2 – 3 mm, awns 4 – 7 mm; lower lemma ovate, 1.9 – 2.1 mm, coriaceous, acute, palea absent; upper lemma lanceolate, herbaceous, 4 – 4.5 mm (excluding awn), hispid on veins, awn 0.8 – 1.2 mm; palea  $\pm$  2.5 mm.

**Flowering:** August – October

**Exsiccatae:** Sepoydhura, Darjiling, 1636 m, September 22, 2010, *S Moktan & A P Das 0492A*, (CAL); *0492B* (NBU).

**Distribution:** INDIA (Kashmir to Sikkim, West Bengal, Khasia Hills, Nilgiri Hills) NEPAL, BHUTAN, CENTRAL EUROPE, SOUTH AFRICA.

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