

***Ficus schefferiana* King (Moraceae) - a new distributional report from India**

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Abstract

Ficus schefferiana King (Moraceae) is recorded for the first time from Assam for India. Detailed description of the species along with its distribution is given in the article.

Key words: *Ficus schefferiana*, new distributional report, India.

INTRODUCTION

The genus *Ficus* Linnaeus (Moraceae) is represented by 800 species in tropical and subtropical regions of the world (Adebayo *et al.* 2009). Asian-Australian region is regarded as richest with 500 species of *Ficus* as compared to Africa and the Neotropics with approximately 110 and 130 species respectively (Ronsted *et al.* 2008). 115 taxa of *Ficus* have been recorded from India (Chaudhary *et al.* 2012) and 42 species from the greater Assam (Kanjilal *et al.* 1940). Recently, Dhungana *et al.* (2015) reported 28 species including 6 varieties and 1 subspecies from six districts of Upper Assam.

After essential study and scrutiny of literature (King 1888; Kanjilal *et al.* 1940; Corner 1965; Chaudhary *et al.* 2012; Dhungana *et al.* 2015) and herbaria (GUBH and ASSAM), the specimen is identified as *F. schefferiana* King and also found that the species has not been reported from India so far and hence it is a new record for India. Even Kanjilal *et al.* (1940) in their "*Flora of Assam*" have not reported the species. King (1888) recognized *F. schefferiana* from Sumatra for the first time. Prior to its present collection from Assam, record of its distribution was restricted only to Sumatra.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Specimen was first collected in the year 2011 from the Jorhat district of Assam (N 26°46'59.7½ and E 94°17'28.6½). Herbarium specimens have been deposited in GUBH, ASSAM and in CAL. Identification of the specimen was done through the consultation of protologue (King 1888) and Corner (1965). Consultation of different Herbaria (ASSAM, GUBH) revealed that the species was not collected earlier from the Indian territory.

The microscopic photography was done through a Carl Zeiss stereozoom-microscope fitted with Cannon Cybershot camera.

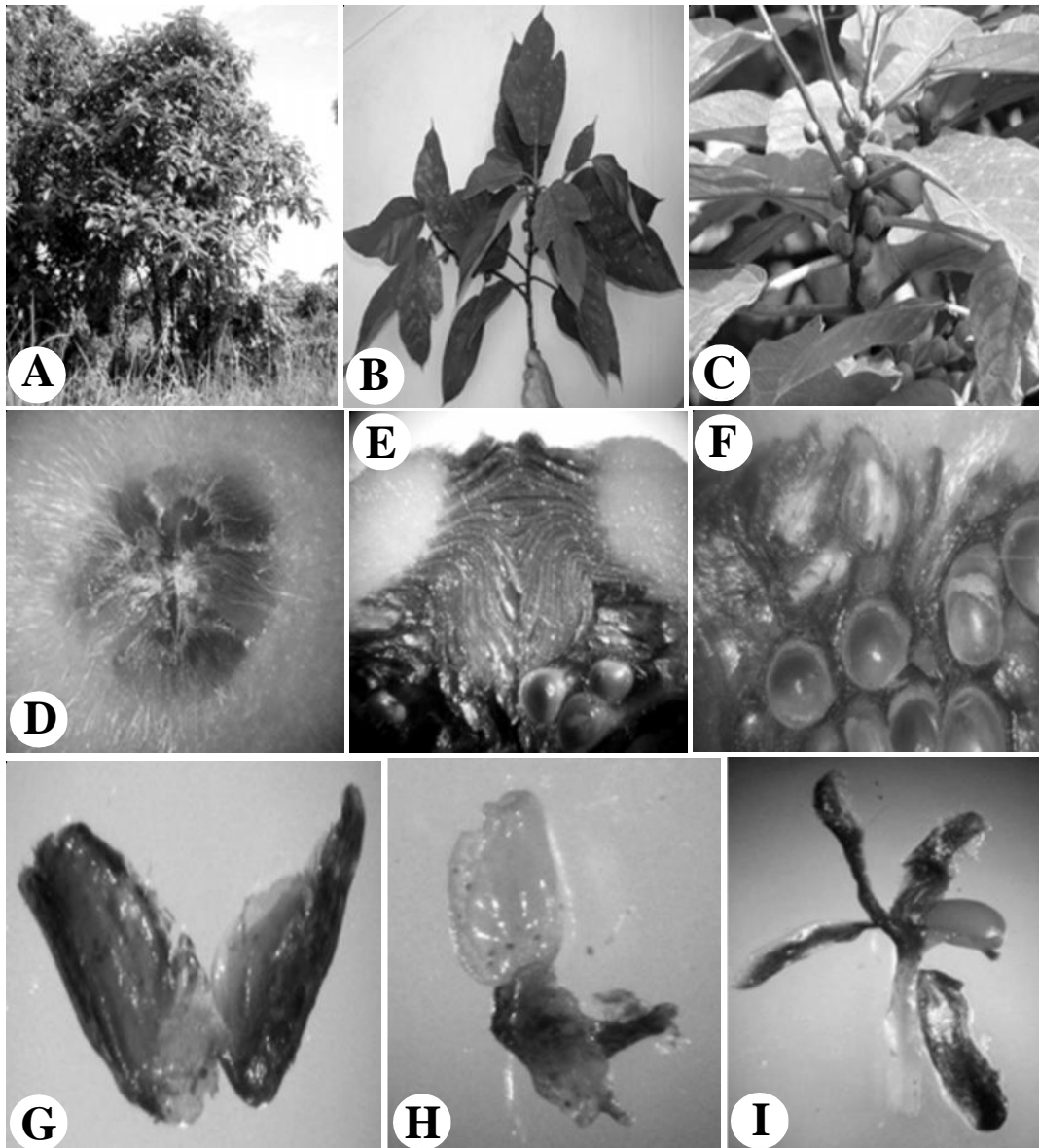


Plate I. *F. schefferiana* King: A. Habitat; B. A twig showing lobed juvenile leaves; C. Axillary hypanthodium; D. Apical bracts; E. L/S through the ostiole; F. L/S showing the arrangement of flowers on the inner wall of the hypanthodium; G. Male flower with tepal; H. Anther; I. Gall flower.

Taxonomic Treatment

Ficus schefferiana King, Ann. Roy. Bot. Gard. (Calcutta) 1: 152 – 153. 1888; Corner, Gard. Bull. Singapore. 21: 45 – 46. 1965. [Plate I: A – I]

Shrub or a small tree. Stipules ovate. Petioles 10 – 15 cm. Leaves inserted on the sub-terminal portion of the branches; lamina lobed when juvenile, becomes entire when mature, elliptic, 13 – 30 x 6 – 17 cm; serrate and irregular, caudate-acuminate, base shortly cordate in juvenile to cuneate or attenuate in adult form, chartaceous, lateral nerves 6 – 9 on either

sides. Hypanthodia axillary, in pairs, sessile, globose, 2 – 3 cm in diam, hirsute when young; basal bracts 3 and apical bracts 4. Male flowers 1 – 2 mm long, located near the apical pore, sessile, tepals 4, stamens 2, 1.5 mm long; Gall flowers 1 – 3 mm long, pedicellate, tepals 4, ovary smooth, style short; female flowers not seen.

Flowering & fruiting: March – April

Local name: *Dimoru* (Assamese)

Distribution: INDIA (Jorhat in Assam); SUMATRA.

Specimen Examined: Sotai, Jorhat, Assam, March 13, 2011, *P. Dhungana 005*; Gibbon Wildlife Sanctuary, Hollongapar, Jorhat. Assam, April 29, 2012, *P. Dhungana 032*.

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