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# A new species of *Sonerila* Roxb. (Melastomaceae) from Meghalaya, India

VED PRAKASH  
&  
B. N. MEHROTRA

## RÉSUMÉ

VED PRAKASH & B. N. MEHROTRA (1988). *Sonerila* Roxb. (Melastomaceae), espèce nouvelle de Meghalaya, Inde. *Candollea* 43: 143-145. En anglais, résumés français et anglais.

Une nouvelle espèce de Meghalaya (Inde), est décrite et illustrée: *Sonerila dharii* Ved Prakash & B. N. Mehrotra, spec. nov. (Melastomaceae).

## ABSTRACT

VED PRAKASH & B. N. MEHROTRA (1988). A new species of *Sonerila* Roxb. (Melastomaceae) from Meghalaya, India. *Candollea* 43: 143-145. In English, French and English abstracts.

A new species *Sonerila dharii* Ved Prakash & B. N. Mehrotra, spec. nov. (Melastomaceae) from Meghalaya, India, is described with illustrations.

During the course of plant collection for the Biological Screening Programme of the Institute, one of us (VP) collected a few specimens of *Sonerila* Roxb. from Jarain in Jaintia Hills of Meghalaya, which were growing in very moist and shady places along stream. The critical studies of specimens revealed them to be different from all other known species of the genus occurring in India, and hence, a new species has been created and is described and illustrated here.

***Sonerila dharii*** Ved Prakash & B. N. Mehrotra, spec. nov. (Fig. 1).

*S. maculata* Roxb. affinis sed differt inflorescentiis capitatis, habitu debili subtilique; a *S. rheedii* Wt. & Arn., *S. rotundifolia* Bedd., *S. wallichii* Benn. et *S. khasiana* Cl. differt caulibus bene evolutis.

**Typus:** India, Meghalaya, Jaintia Hills Dist., Jarain, Alt.  $\pm$  1400 m, Oct. 3, 1985, *Ved Prakash 14898 A* (holotype: CDRI); *Ved Prakash 14898 B-D* (isotypes, CDRI).

A small, herb, ca. 10-15 cm long with erect or ascending stem. *Leaves* opposite, long petioled; *petiole* (0.5-)1.0-2.5 cm long with brown spreading hairs; *lamina* 1.0-5.0 cm long, 0.5-2.5 cm broad, ovate to ovate-lanceolate, rounded (-oblique) at base, subacute-obtuse et apex, serrate and ciliate with long spreading hairs on margins, glabrous to sparsely hairy on both surfaces, green above, purple below, 3-7-nerved from base, and 2-3 upper nerves from midrib. Inflorescence terminal. *Flowers* purple,  $\pm$  2 cm across, 3-merous, 3-8 capitate (crowded) at the end of 2-4 cm long, slender peduncle; pedicels 0 or very short. *Calyx-tube* ca. 4-8 mm long, narrowly funnel-shaped with few hairs, shortly 3-toothed, at mouth. *Petals* 3 upto  $\pm$  1.2 cm long, elliptic-oblong to lanceolate-elliptic, abruptly acute-acuminate, entire, 1-nerved, glabrous to sparsely hairy along nerves below. *Stamens* 3, equal, upto 1.2 cm long (including filaments). *Anthers* yellow, upto 0.7 cm long, attenuate-beaked. Pistil with upto  $\pm$  1 cm long filiform style and simple stigma.

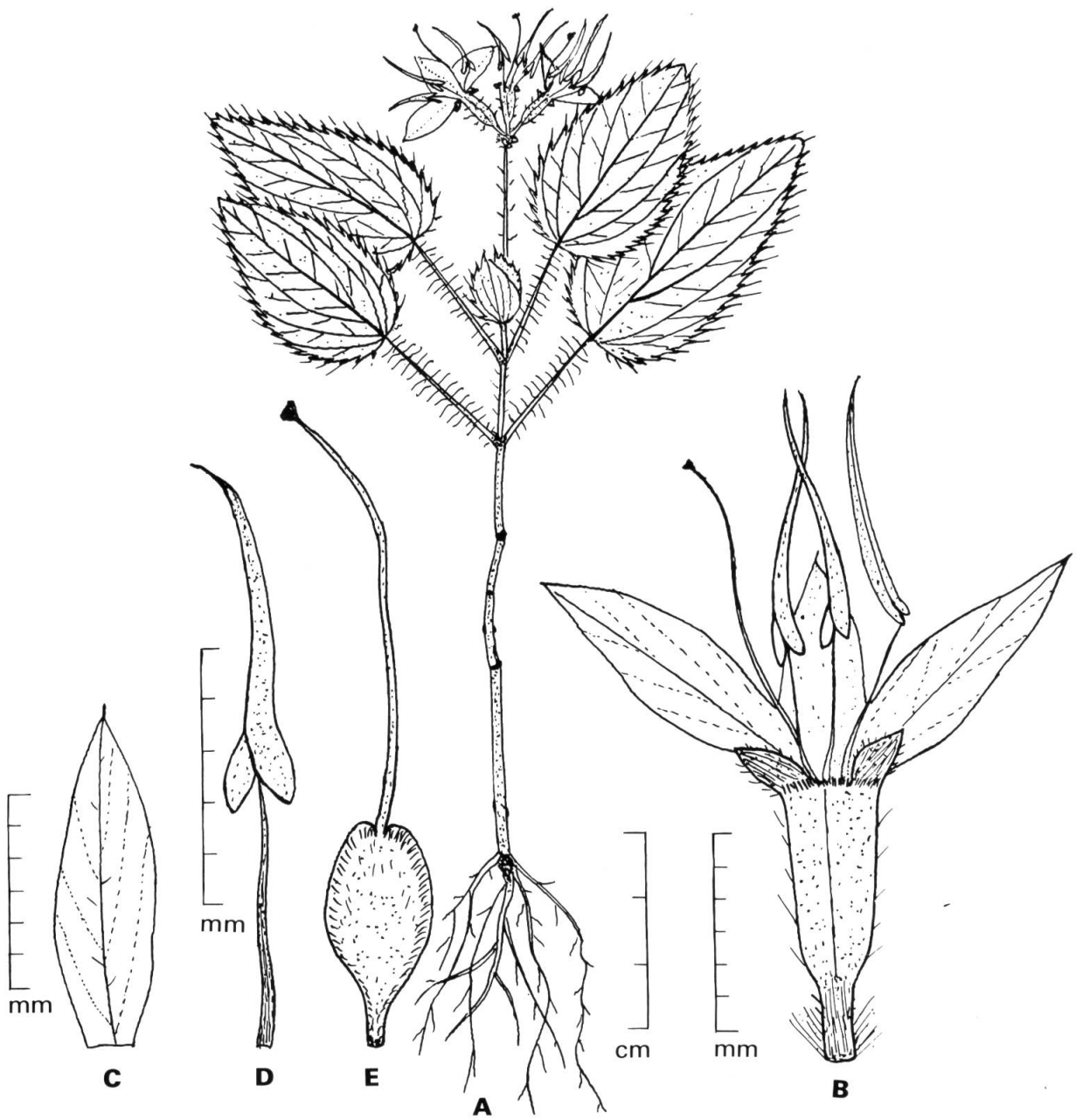


Fig. 1. — *Sonerila dharii* Ved Prakash & B. N. Mehrotra, spec. nov.  
A, habit; B, flower; C, petal; D, stamen; E, pistil.

*Etymology.* — The species is named after Dr. M. M. Dhar, Director of the Institute.

*Note.* — This species is allied to *S. maculata* Roxb. (known from N.E. India, Nepal and Burma) but it differs from the latter in having a bit larger flowers in capitate type of inflorescence with weak and delicate habit; in *S. maculata* inflorescence is a scorpioid cyme and plants are robust in nature.

As the new species reported here has well developed stem, it differs from *S. rheedii* Wt. & Arn., *S. rotundifolia* Bedd., *S. wallichii* Benn. (all known from South India) and *S. khasiana* Cl. (known from Meghalaya) which are stemless or with very short stem.

For the confirmation of identity of new species the types and original description of *S. maculata* Roxb. were examined in Kew Herbarium, London, and it was found that the citation of RHEED's (1689) reference ("Hortus Malabaricus", Vol. 9: 127, plate 65) by ROXBURGH (1820) under *S. maculata* was incorrect. The scrutiny of literature, revealed that the RHEED's (l.c.) illustration and description belong to *S. rheedii* Wt. & Arn. which is known from Western Ghats of S. India. The type of *S. maculata* Roxb. should be considered Wallich's specimen from Nepal.

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