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# Crotalaria kurisumalayana Sibichen & Nampy (Fabaceae), a new species from India

M. Thomas Sibichen & Santhosh Nampy

## Abstract

SIBICHEN, M. THOMAS & S. NAMPY (2007). *Crotalaria kurisumalayana* Sibichen & Nampy (Fabaceae), a new species from India. *Candollea* 62: 105-108. In English, English and French abstracts.

A new species of *Crotalaria* L. (Fabaceae) from India, *Crotalaria kurisumalayana* Sibichen & Nampy, is described, illustrated and compared with *Crotalaria multiflora* (Arn.) Benth.

## Key-words

FABACEAE – Kerala – India – Taxonomy

## Résumé

SIBICHEN, M. THOMAS & S. NAMPY (2007). *Crotalaria kurisumalayana* Sibichen & Nampy (Fabaceae), une nouvelle espèce d'Inde. *Candollea* 62: 105-108. En anglais, résumés anglais et français.

Une nouvelle espèce de *Crotalaria* L. (Fabaceae), *Crotalaria kurisumalayana* Sibichen & Nampy, est décrite, illustrée et comparée avec *Crotalaria multiflora* (Arn.) Benth.

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The genus *Crotalaria* L., with about 600 species, is widespread in the tropics and subtropics primarily of the southern hemisphere (POLHILL, 1982). It is represented by 99 species in India (KUMAR & SANE, 2003), of which 34 species and 5 varieties are endemic to South India (AHMEDULLAH & NAYAR, 1987: 94-97). SIBICHEN (2004) reported 66 species and 4 infra-specific taxa from South India.

During revisionary studies of the genus in South India, an interesting specimen has been collected from Kurisumala, a peak in the Vagamon hills in Kottayam District, Kerala. Critical examination revealed that it is a new species, which is described, illustrated and compared with *Crotalaria multiflora* (Arn.) Benth.

***Crotalaria kurisumalayana*** Sibichen & Nampy, **spec. nova** (Fig. 1)

**Typus:** INDIA. Kerala: Kottayam District, Vagamon hills, Kurisumala 900 m., 1.XI.2002, *Sibichen & Nampy* 732 (holo-: CAL; iso-: CALI, SJC [Herbarium of St. Joseph's College, Kozhikode-8, Kerala, India]).

*Species haec habitu Crotalaria multiflorae valde affinis sed statura minore, habitu prostrato ramis serpentibus arcuatis, foliis rotundatis vel ovatis, racemis laxis et leguminibus sericeis ferrugineisque differt.*

Prostrate, short lived perennial herb with a few, long, slender, arcuate branches reaching 15-30 cm long. Stems and branches terete, strigose. Leaves simple, sessile; petioles 1-2 mm long; lamina 2.2-2.5 × 2-2.2 cm, nearly round, rarely ovate, base and apex more or less rounded, glabrous above and puberulous beneath; stipules 1-2 mm long, lanceolate, deflexed. Racemes terminal and leaf opposed, 10-15 cm long, lax, 2-8 flowered. Flowers 2-2.2 × 2.2-2.5 cm, showy; bracts 4 × 2 mm, ovate, ascending; bracteoles 2 × 1 mm, subulate, inserted near middle of the pedicel. Calyx 5-lobed; lobes 17 × 5 mm, lanceolate, puberulous out and glabrous in, broad

purple streaks along the margin; two upper lobes connate basally. Corolla sulphur-yellow; standard petal 2.5 × 2 cm, orbicular, slightly retuse at the apex, with two basal appendages at the base; wing petals 2 × 1 cm, obovate, base attenuate, apex rounded; keel petals 1.7 × 0.8 cm, rounded about the middle, woolly along the inner margin, beak twisted to 180°. Staminal sheath 5 mm long, glabrous; alternate filaments 9 mm and 6 mm long with ovoid (1 mm long) and oblong (3 mm long) anthers respectively. Ovary 6 × 3 mm, thinly puberulous; style 1.2 cm long, falcate with a few hairs on the inner side near the apex; stigma narrow. Pods 3.5 × 0.8 cm, oblong, much inflated, sericeous, ferruginous, 10-12 seeded; hairs non-overlapping. Seeds 4 × 3 mm, obliquely cordate, laterally compressed, arillate.

**Paratypus.** – INDIA. Kerala: Idukki District, Kattappana to Elappara way side, ± 780 m, 26.XII.2001, *Sibichen & Nampy* 671 (SJC [Herbarium of St. Joseph's College, Kozhikode-8, Kerala, India]).

**Distribution and habitat.** – Extremely rare, *C. kurisumalayana* grows in soil pockets in exposed rocks and also on vertical earth cuttings in tea estates.

**Phenology.** – September - May.

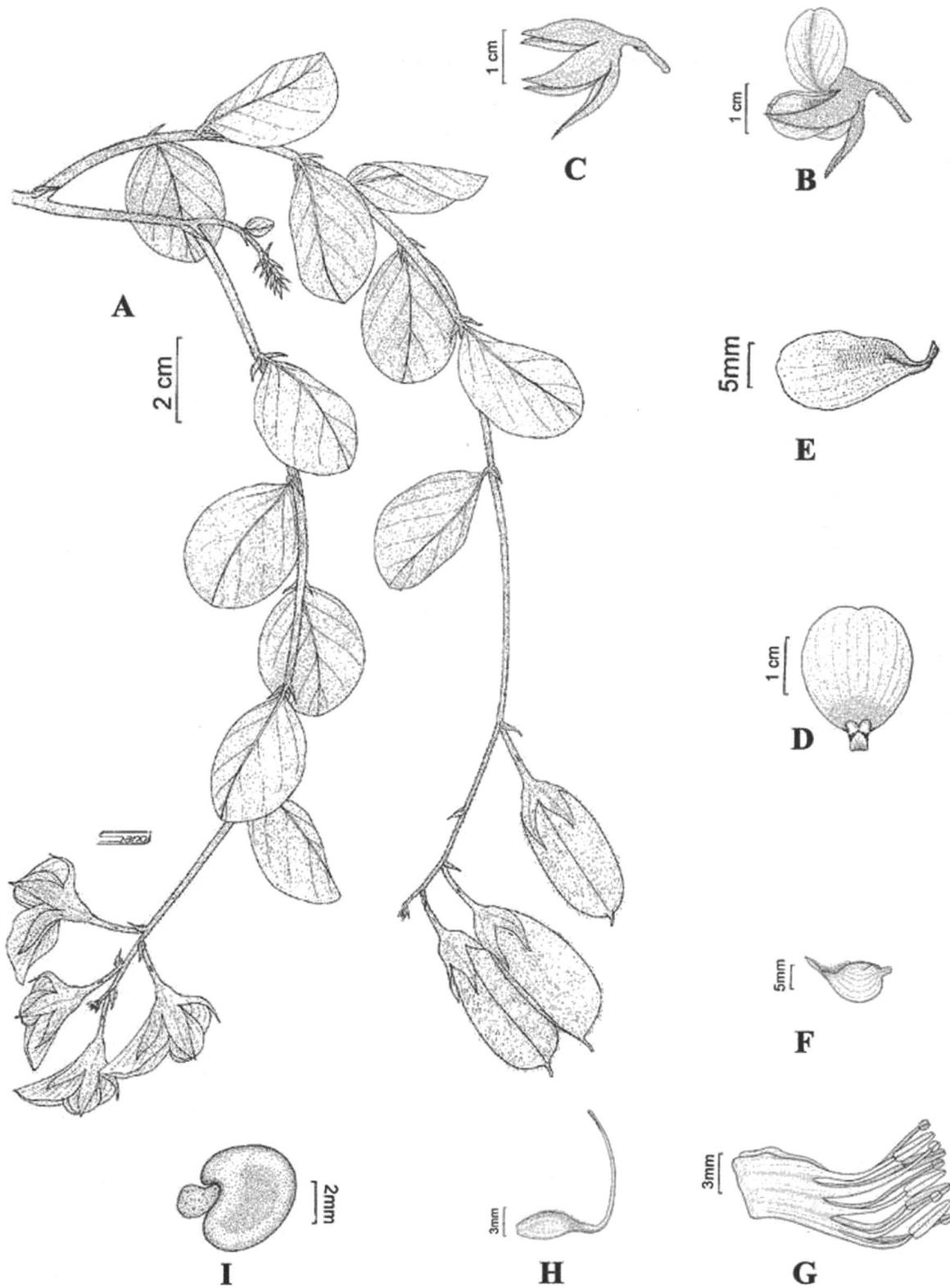
**Etymology.** – The species is named after the type locality, Kurisumala, the peak of Vagamon hills in Kottayam District, Kerala state.

**Notes.** – *Crotalaria kurisumalayana* is closely allied to *C. multiflora*, but is distinct in its smaller size, prostrate habit with trailing, arcuate branches; orbicular to ovate leaves; lax racemes and thinly sericeous, ferruginous pods (Table 1).

RUDD (1991: 197) has treated *C. multiflora* as apparently endemic to Sri Lanka. But it was reported from South India by GAMBLE (1918: 293), NAIR & HENRY (1983: 99) and VAJRAVELU (1990: 151). We also have collected this species from Idukki district in Kerala.

**Table 1.** – Morphological differences between *Crotalaria kurisumalayana* Sibichen & Nampy and *C. multiflora* (Arn.) Benth.

<i>C. kurisumalayana</i>	<i>C. multiflora</i>
1. Prostrate herb	Diffuse low shrub
2. Branches 15-30 cm long, trailing, slender and arcuate	Branches 40-75 cm long, ascending, stout and more or less straight
3. Leaves uniformly small (2.2-2.5 × 2-2.2 cm), mostly orbicular rarely ovate; base and apex rounded; lamina glabrous above and puberulous beneath	Leaves variable in size (4-6 × 2-3.5cm) and shape (ovate, lanceolate); base ovate; apex acute, lamina puberulent above and patent pubescent beneath
4. Peduncle 10-15 cm long and flowers laxly arranged	Peduncle 3-7 cm long and flowers arranged towards apex
5. Corolla yellow without purple striations; standard petal orbicular; keel petal woolly along the inner margin	Corolla yellow with prominent purple striations; standard petal obovate; keel petal not woolly along the inner margin
6. Style glabrous; stigma narrow	Style pubescent near the apex; stigma expanded
7. Pod sericeous, hairs non-overlapping; seeds laterally compressed	Pod sericeous, hairs overlapping; seeds inflated



**Fig. 1.** – *Crotalaria kurisumalayana* Sibichen & Nampy. **A.** Habit; **B.** Flower; **C.** Calyx; **D.** Standard petal; **E.** Wing petal; **F.** Keel petal; **G.** Staminal sheath; **H.** Gynoeceum; **I.** Seed.

[Sibichen & Nampy 732] [Drawn by Sanoj E]

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