

Muntingia calabura L. (Elaeocarpaceae): A New Generic Record to the Flora of Gujarat State, India.

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Abstract: The present paper deals with the genus *Muntingia* L., belonging to family Elaeocarpaceae. It is reported here as an addition to the Flora of Gujarat State. The paper also envisages brief citation, description, phenological data and illustrations of the species. The details of nomenclatural citation followed by description, phenological data, habitat and colour photographs are provided.

Key Words: Elaeocarpaceae, Godhra, Gujarat, India, *Muntingia*, New record.

Introduction

Muntingia calabura L. (Jamaica cherry) is indigenous to southern Mexico, Central America, tropical South America, the Greater Antilles, St. Vincent and Trinidad. *Muntingia calabura* L. is widely cultivated in warm areas of the New World and in India, Southeast Asia, Malaya, Indonesia, and Philippines (Morton, 1987). It is also commonly found of the wild in southern Taiwan (Boufford *et al.*, 2003).

During the botanical exploration of around Godhra, Panchmahals Districts, Gujarat, the author collected specimens of an interesting plant. After critical examination and going thorough literature, the identity of the specimens determined as *Muntingia calabura* L. (Elaeocarpaceae). So far, this taxon has not been recorded from the State (Blatter, 1908-1909; Saxton & Sedgwick, 1918; Saxton, 1922; Thakar, 1926; Santapau, 1962; Shah, 1978; Raghavan *et al.*, 1981; Bole & Pathak, 1988; Pilo *et al.*, 1996; Pandey & Singh, 1999; Singh & Parabia, 2003). The present finding forms a new record for Gujarat, India.

This plant has several vernacular names like straw berry tree, Jamaican cherry (English), Chinese cherry (or) Japanese cherry (India), cherry chettu (Telugu), Krakhob (Cambodian), Bois Ramier (French), Kersen (Indonesian), Takhob (Laotian), Kerukup siam (Malay), Calabura, Páo De Seda (Portuguese), Calabura or Capulin (Spanish), Takhop farang (Thai) and Trung camat sam (Vietnamese) (Fosberg *et al.*, 1979).

Taxonomic Description:

Muntingia calabura L., Sp. Pl. 509. 1753; Manilal & Sivar., Fl. Calicut 54. 1982; Babu, Fl. Malappuram Dist. 90. 1990; S.K. Murti in B.D. Sharma & Sanjappa, Fl. India 3: 570. 1993; M. Reema *et al.* in P. Daniel, Fl. Kerala 1: 505. 2005; Sunil & Sivadasan, Fl. Alappuzha Dist. 146. 2009; Ratheesh Narayanan, Fl. Stud. Wayanad Dist. 175. 2009. (Figure 1)

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Figure 1(A-E): Plate of *Muntingia calabura* L. (Elaeocarpaceae)

A: Plant; B: Leaves (Dorsal Part)
C: Leaves (Ventral Part); D: Flower
E: Fruit (Unripen)

Trees, to 7 m high with spreading, nearly horizontal branches; branchlets densely villous, glandular pubescent. Leaves evergreen, simple, alternate; stipules 1 linear, 5 mm long, lateral, filiform, hairy; petiole 5 mm long; lamina 611 x 24 cm, lanceolate or oblonglanceolate, base obliquely subcordate, apex acuminate, margin serrate, glandular hairy above, woolly beneath; lateral nerves 35 pairs, pinnate, prominent, intercostae reticulate, prominent. Inflorescences supraaxillary, usually 1flowered. Flowers bisexual, 1.53 cm across, white; pedicels 22.5 cm long; sepals 5, 1.5 cm long, lanceolate, valvate, shortly connate at

base, densely pubescent; petals 5, thin, ovate, obovate or suborbicular, shortly clawed, entire, imbricate, crumpled in bud; intrastaminal disc annular, bearing a ring of hairs on the exterior margin; stamens many, yellow, ca. 1 cm long; filaments filiform; ovary superior, 56 mm long, ellipsoid, 5celled, ovules many; styles short; stigmas capitate, 5grooved. Fruit a berry, 11.5 cm across, red or yellow, subglobular; seeds many, obovoid ellipsoid, many.

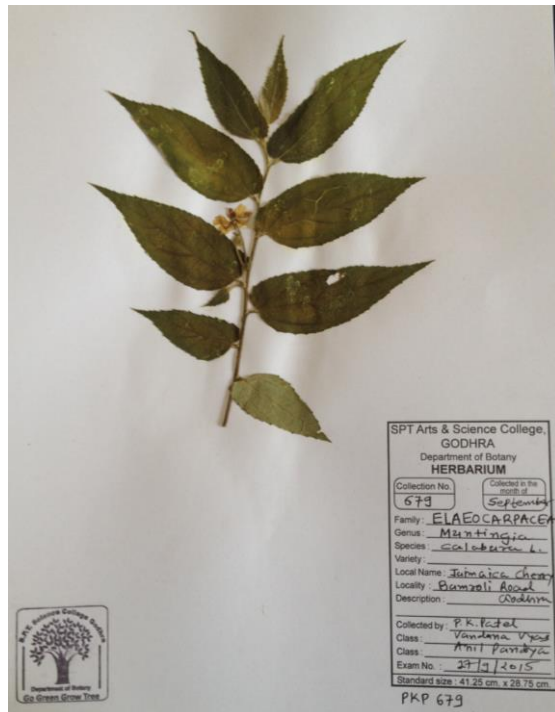


Figure 2:

Flowers & Fruits: Throughout the year

Native: Southern Mexico, Central America.

Distribution: India; Gujarat; Maharashtra; Karnataka; Tamil Nadu.

Specimens Examined: INDIA. Gujarat, Panchmahals District, Near Vavdi Buzurg, Bamroli Road, Godhra, 22.7773° N, 73.6203° alt. 73 m, 17 September 2015, PKP 00679 (Department of Botany, SPT Science College, Godhra) (Figure-2)

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