

A NEW VARIETY OF *COMETES SURATTENSIS* BURM. (ILLECEBRACEAE) FROM NORTH GUJARAT

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Cometes surattensis Burm. var. *ambajiensis* Bedi et Madala var. nov. differt a *Cometes surattensis* Burm. pubescentis foliis sessilibus et minus latis; perianthis filamentis longioribus, et stylis filiformis tamen non curvatus.

An annual, erect, dichotomously branched, hairy herb. Stem 5 to 15 cm tall, terete, lower internodes stunted, younger parts more pubescent. Leaves opposite, sessile, pubescent, elliptic lanceolate, 5 to 15 mm long and 3 to 6 mm broad. Stipules setaceous, 0.5 to 2 mm long with slightly broader base. Flowers numerous, raised on filiform hairy peduncles; each peduncle having a cluster of three flowers, 3 to 7 mm long and 3 to 6 mm broad; mostly median flower alone perfect. Bracts dimorphic, lower and outer clawed, margins irregularly cut, projecting downward or outwards; upper bracts when young smaller, less branched and projecting upward; the older bracts more pubescent, yellowish brown, pinnatifid, enlarged, much branched, encircling and overtopping the cluster of 3 flowers. Perianth lobes 5, unequal in size, pubescent outside, erect, lanceolate; apex mucronate projecting backward; margin hyaline, slightly dissected to ciliate. Stamens included, subperigynous and connate at the base; 5 perfect taller, alternating with five narrow membranous staminodes. Anthers versatile. Ovary ovoid-lanceolate; style filiform erect; stigma 3 toothed, reclinate; ovule erect; testa membranous. Utricle acute, enclosed in the perianth lobes. Seed obovoid, planoconvex, erect with large chalaza, ovoid blackish spot on the convex side. Seeds mostly two from each cluster of 3 flowers, very rarely 1 or 3 seeds also observed. (See Plate I).

Holotype *Bedi* 10,079 (16.10.1979) and Paratype *Bedi* 10,002 (15.10.79), R.K.M. 204 (17.12.79) & 323 (28.4.80) collected from old mining sites (Copper-Zinc-Lead); on the north of Ambaji town, North Gujarat, India and deposited in the Herbarium, Department of Botany, M.S. University of Baroda, Baroda.

Isotype *Bedi* 10,079 B & C (16.10.1979) deposited in the F.R.I. Herbarium, Dehra Dun.

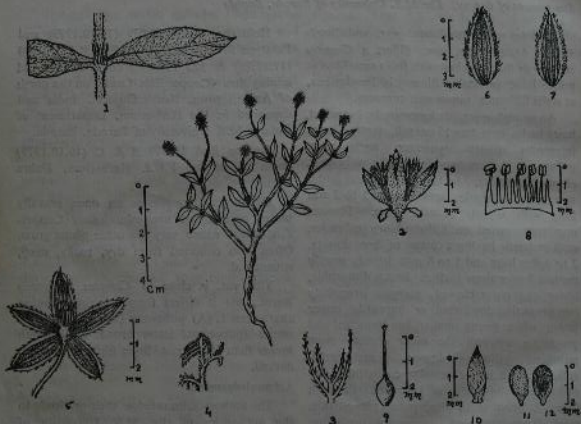
Common among grasses on open gravelly places in old and new mining sites (Copper-Zinc-Lead) where very few other plants grow. Often also collected from dry, rocky, steep, stream bed.

This var. is close to *Cometes surattensis* Burm., but it differs from it in the following characters: 1. (A) pubescent (herb). 2. Leaves sessile (pubescent) lesser broad. 3. Perianth longer than filament. 4. Style filiform but not curved.

Acknowledgements

The authors acknowledge their gratitude to the authorities of the M.S. University of Baroda for financing the research project and authorities of the Gujarat Mineral Development Corporation for their help and facilities during the field trips. To Professor M.B. Raizada the authors are deeply indebted for critical examination of the species and suggestions that it is a new variety of *Cometes surattensis* Burm. We are also thankful to Prof. S.D. Sabnis for his valuable comments and suggestions and to Fr. K.M. Matthew, of St. Joseph's College, Tiruchirappalli for the Latin diagnosis.

Plate I



Figs. 1. Enlarged leaves with setaceous stipules. 2. Cluster of flowers. 3. Young bracts. 4. Matured bracts. 5. Flower. 6. Perianth, ventral side. 7. Perianth, dorsal side. 8. Stamens showing alternate staminodes. 9. Gynoecium. 10. Utricle. 11 & 12. Seed (planconvex).