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***Timonius finlaysonianus* (Wall. ex G. Don) Hook. f. (Rubiaceae): A new addition to the flora of India from Andaman and Nicobar Islands**

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ABSTRACT

Timonius finlaysonianus (Wall. ex G. Don) Hook. f., is a flowering plant belonging to the family Rubiaceae, is reported from Andaman and Nicobar Islands as a new addition to the flora of India. Species native range is west and central Malaysia, now we have collected from Teressa Island of Nicobar group. A brief description, photographs, distribution map are provided with ecological notes.

Key words: Angiosperm, Rubiaceae, New record, India, Teressa Island.

INTRODUCTION

The genus *Timonius* Rumph. ex DC. (Family: Rubiaceae) which comprises ca. 215 species in the world (Govaerts *et al.* 2021). The genus is commonly distributed in tropical and subtropical Asia to the Pacific. In India, so far the genus *Timonius* is represented by only one species *T. flavescens* (Jacq.) Baker from Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

During floristic survey of Teressa Island, the authors collected a species from Aloorang village area (Fig. 1) in its flowering and fruiting phase, subsequently it's confirmed as *Timonius finlaysonianus* (Wall. ex G. Don) Hook. f. Based on the available literature (Lakshminarasimhan and Rao 1996, Shina 1999, Pandey and Diwakar 2008, Prasad *et al.* 2009, Darwin 2010, Chen *et al.* 2015, Wong *et al.* 2019) this angiosperm species is unknown for India, which is reported here. A thorough description and color photographs are provided for effortless identification.

SYSTEMATIC ENUMERATION

Timonius finlaysonianus (Wall. ex G. Don) Hook. f., Fl. Brit. India 3: 127 1880, *Guettarda finlaysoniana*

Wall. ex G. Don, Gen. Hist. 3: 552 1834, *Polyphragmon compressicaule* Miq., Fl. Ned. Ind. 2: 235 1857, *Timonius compressicaulis* (Miq.) Boerl., Handl. Fl. Ned. Ind. 2(1): 133 1891, *Timonius jambosella* var. *finlaysoniana* (Wall. ex G. Don) King & Gamble, J. Asiat. Soc. Bengal, Pt. 2, Nat. Hist. 73: 54 1904.

Shrubs, ca. 2–3 m tall, bark smooth, grey-brown. Leaves simple, opposite, fleshy leathery blades, 8–15 × 4–9 cm, obovate to elliptic, base cuneate, apex acute, glabrous, petiole sub-sessile ca. 2–6 mm long, secondary veins 5 pairs, stipules present. Male flowers white, with 5 lobes arranged in small clusters, corolla hairy inside, glabrous outside, flower tube ca. 6–8 mm long, peduncle 5–30 mm long. Female flowers solitary, lobes 6–8, peduncle 8–30 mm long and have a cup-shaped calyx. Fruits globose, 7–10 mm across, knobby, glabrous, capped by persistent calyx (Fig. 2).

Flowering & Fruiting: January–April.

Habitat: Perennial shrub which is found growing in open mixed grassland forest and also in rocky cliffs.

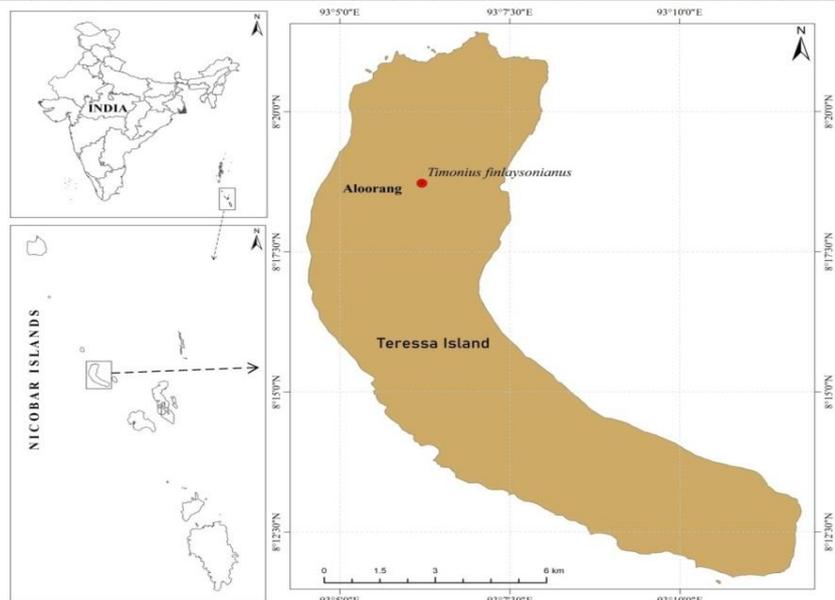


Fig. 1. Distribution of *Timonius finlaysonianus* (Wall. ex G. Don) Hook. f., in Teressa Island.

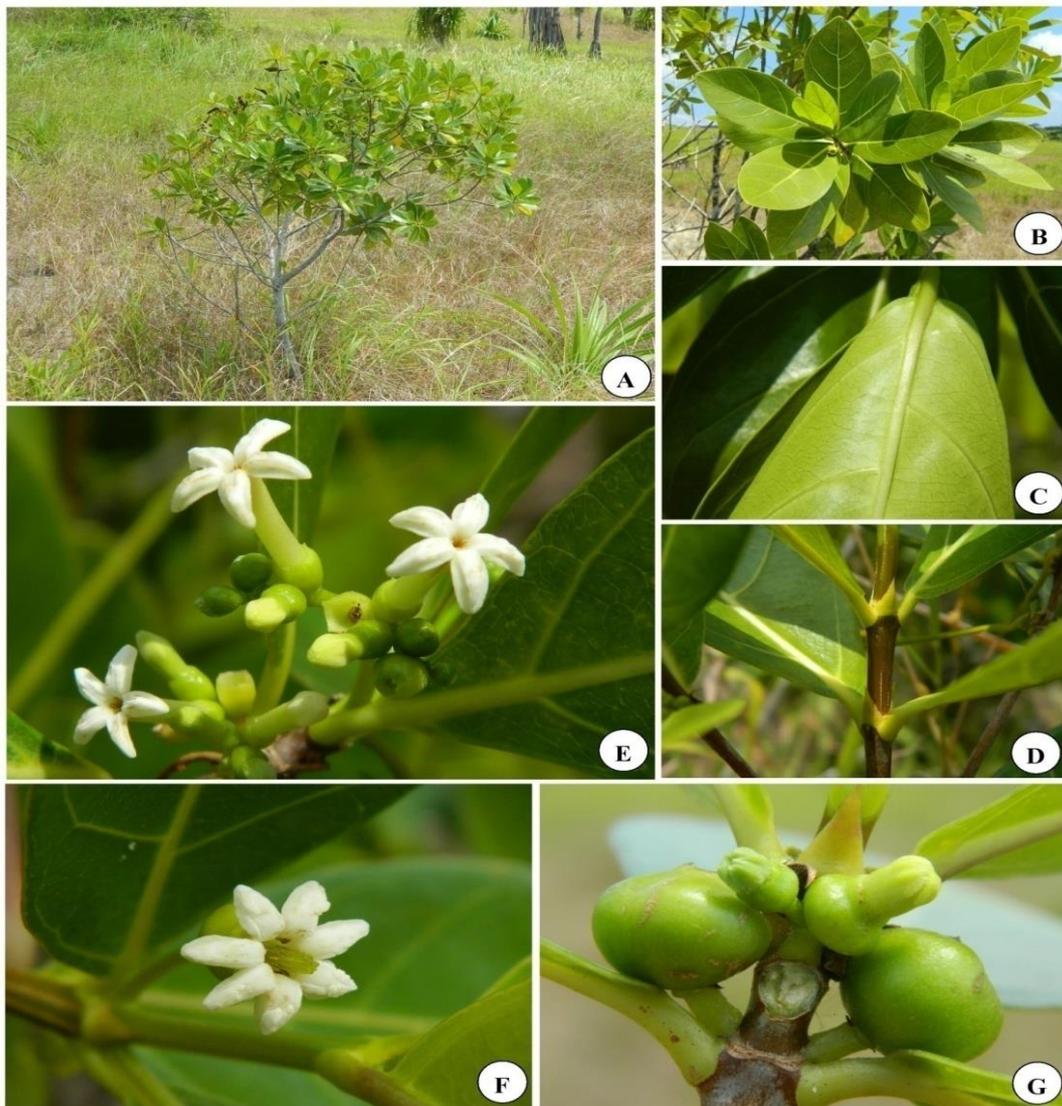


Fig. 2. *Timonius finlaysonianus* (Wall. ex G. Don) Hook. f. (Rubiaceae): A- Habit; B- Leaf blades; C- Dorsal leaf blade; D- Stipules; E- Staminate flowers; F- Pistillate flower; G- Fruits. Photographs by AK. Das (A-G).

Specimens examined: India: Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Teressa Island, Aloorang 17th February 2021, *Apurba Kumar Das* 003563 (PBL).

Location: Latitude: 8°18'41.23"N, Longitude: 93°6'45.05"E, Altitude: 60 m MSL.

Distribution: Borneo, Java, Malaya, Philippines, Sumatera, Singapore and now from India (Nicobar Island).

Ecological notes: The population of this species was very less only 17 individuals were observed at Aloorang in Teressa Island during the survey period, which occurs in a single locality about 1.9 km away from coast. Associated species are *Phragmites karka* (Retz.) Trin. ex Steud., *Pandanus leram* Jones ex R. Millar, *Pachystoma pubescens* Blume and *Aporosa villosa* (Lindl.) Baill.

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