

An addition to the Grass Flora of India - *Andropogon polyptychus* Steud Var *polyptychus* *

by
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Synopsis: This note records the occurrence of *Andropogon polyptychus*. Steud var *polyptychus* for the first time in the Nilgiris and incidentally in India.

Introduction: The detailed description of *Andropogon polyptychus* var *polyptychus* recorded for the first time in the Nilgiris and incidentally in India is given below. For the excellent sketch of this species, the readers may refer to Dr. Bor's book 'Grasses of Burma, Ceylon, India and Pakistan'.

Description: *Andropogon polyptychus* steud syn. pl. Glum 1, 380 (1854) *Dichanthium polyptychus* (steud) A. camus in Bull. Mus. Hist. Nat. Paris, 27, 589 (1921).

Tufted perennial grass culms many, erect 60 cm to 1 m. long nodes usually softly villous, sometimes sparingly so. Leaves Cauline, flat, upto 20.5 cm. long and 0.5 to 1 cm. wide, hairy on both sides, Linear, acuminate leaf sheaths hairy but glabrous near the nodes, Lingule a membrane 1.5 m. m. long. Racemes digitate to sub-digitate, 2 to 9, 3 to 6 cms. long, peduncles below the racemes hairy, joints and pedicels slender, hairy, upper cup of joints without any appendages. Sessile and pedicelled spikelets almost equal - 6 to 7 mm. long. Sessile spikelets bisexual except the lowest one or two in each raceme which are male or neuter. Sessile spikelet - Lower glume lanceolate, acute sometimes obtuse, coriaceous, usually concave on the back, 2 keeled, keels hairy otherwise the rest glabrous usually with 7 nerves. 6 - 7 mm. long. Upper glume boat shaped, one keeled, lanceolate, acute, margin hairy in upper half, 3 nerved, middle vein very prominent, length almost the same as the lower glumes or slightly longer. Lower lemma: hyaline about 5 mm. long one nerved in upper portion, empty, without any palea. Upper lemma: hyaline about 4 mm. long shortly bifid with an awn from the sinus, palea small and hairy, containing a bi-sexual floret, awn 1.7 to 1.8 mm. long.

Pedicelled spikelet - Lower glume, Ovate lanceolate, acute, 6 to 7 mm. long and about 2 mm. wide, keeled, keels shortly winged and hairy in upper half otherwise the rest glabrous, nerves many, from 13 to 15. Upper glume almost of the same length as the spikelet, 2 keeled, boat shaped, membranous, 4 nerved, margins hairy. Lemmas hyaline with hairy margin, one nerved without palea, Upper lemma containing a male floret.

Distribution - Burma, Ceylon and the Nilgiris, South India.

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* Received on 18-12-1963.

India - Near the Farm of Soil Conservation Research Centre, Ootacamund, The Nilgiris (Madras State) September, 1961. S. Chinnamani and B. Haldorai. Near Parson's Valley at about 7000' elevation, The Nilgiris - 10th October, 1962 - S. C. Gupte.

The specimen of Indian origin has been deposited at kew.

It appears that this record of the occurrence of the species in India, has solved the puzzle of its apparently discontinuous distribution in Burma and Ceylon.

Andropogon polytychus var *polytychus* of Indian origin seems to differ from its description as given in Dr. Bor's book in one respect. The Indian specimen has hairy peduncle below inflorescence.

It may also be pointed out here that another variety of *Andropogon polytychus* var *deccanensis* Bor, is found to occur near Upper Bhavani areas in the Nilgiris and Western ghats at about 7000' elevation. This variety differs considerably from *A. polytychus* var *polytychus* in a number of characters. In the variety *deccanensis* the leaves are ashy green in colour. Filiform and mostly basal. It is also found to grow in marshy areas. Dr. Bor mentions that "*A. polytychus* var *deccanensis* is most probably worthy of being elevated to specific rank as it differs in some important respects from *A. polytychus* var *polytychus*".

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