



**SONERILA RAGHAVIANA RATHEESH ET AL (MELASTOMATACEAE)-A NEW DISTRIBUTIONAL RECORD FOR KERALA, INDIA**

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**ABSTRACT**

*Sonerila raghaviana* a recently described species from the state of Karnataka is collected from Paithalmala, Kerala is reported as a new addition to the flora of Kerala. Brief description along with notes on habitat, distribution, conservation status are provided along with colour image.

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**INTRODUCTION**

The genus *Sonerila* Roxb. is mostly distributed in the tropical Asia and represented by about 175 species (Lundin & Nordenstam, 2009, Deepikakumari & Pandurangan, 2014). The members are mostly herbaceous, and are found along the wet places in grasslands, streams, rocks before summer. In India the genus is represented by 52 species (Deepikakumari & Pandurangan, 2016) among which a good number are found in the Western Ghats. Recently a few species has been described newly from South India including *S. raghaviana* Ratheesh *et al* (2013). The species was so far collected only from two localities from the Thalacauvery Hills of Coorg District of Karnataka. In 2015, during an exploration trip to Paithalmala of Kannur District, Kerala, the authors collected *Sonerila* specimens from the grasslands. The detailed study confirmed it as *S. raghaviana* Ratheesh *et al* and is reported as addition to the flora of Kerala.

**Taxonomy**

*Sonerila raghaviana* Ratheesh, Sunil, Nandakumar & Shaju, Int. J. of Advanced Research 2:10 772-777. 2013.

Scapigerous herbs, c. 12 cm high. Rhizome short, leaves radical, 3-5 per plant, orbicular, 3.5-6x 3.3-5.5 cm, apex sub-acute, base cordate, margin serrate, pilose hispid above, glabrous except veins below, basally 7-nerved, impressed above, raised below, pinkish below; petiole 3-5 cm long,

sparsely hispid, pinkish. Scapes 1-3, 6-10 cm long, tetragonous, glandular hispid, deep pink; flowers c. 1.8 cm across, in scorpioid cymes, 10-14, pedicellate, pedicel c. 5 mm long, thick, villous, terete. Hypanthium urn shaped, dense glandular bristly, 3-5x2-3 mm, ridged, greenish pink; lobes 3, triangular c. 1x1.5 mm, apex acute, glandular hispid. Petals 3, obovate, 8-10x 6-7 mm, apex mucronate, glabrous above, midrib with few glandular bristles below, pinkish-rose. Stamens 3, filaments 3-4 mm long, glabrous, pinkish; anther c. 2 mm long, bright yellow, base sagittate, acuminate. Ovary trilocular, placenta swollen axile, ovules many; style 5-6 mm long, glabrous; stigma capitate, deep purple, rugose. Capsules urn shaped, 4-6 mm long, prominently ridged, densely glandular bristly, greenish. Seeds many, ovate-oblong, brownish.

**Specimen examined:** 1643, 29.08.2015, Paithalmala, Kannur District, Kerala, India, ±1060 m, coll. Josekutty & J. Augustine (deposited at St. Thomas College Herbarium, Pala, Kottayam (STCP) (Figure 1)

**Distribution:** India: Karnataka (Coorg District) & Kerala (present report); endemic to Western Ghats.

**Habitat:** Occasional in grasslands, usually around isolated rocks.

**Flowering and Fruiting:** July-September

**Notes**

*Sonerila raghaviana* Ratheesh *et al* is endemic to Western Ghats and show highly restricted distribution. They are mostly

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found along Brahmagiri ranges at higher altitudes in Karnataka (Thalacauvery (Type locality), Thadiantamol) at altitudes above 1000 m a. s. l. The present collection is from the montane grasslands 1000 m a. s. l. in Paithalmala, Kannur District, Kerala. The habitat is subject to anthropogenic wildfires in summer and the plants around the rock margins and crevices alone survive. Since the species has restricted distribution under vulnerable habitats, the species can be considered threatened and need further study to evaluate the IUCN Status.



Figure 1 *Sonerila raghaviana* Ratheesh *et al* Habit

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