



A new Combination in *Crotalaria multiflora* (Arn.) Benth. (Fabaceae)

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Abstract

Crotalaria kurisumalayana Sibichen & Nampy is reduced to a variety of *Crotalaria multiflora* (Arn.) Benth.

Key words: Fabaceae, Kerala, *Crotalaria multiflora*, *Crotalaria kurisumalayana*

Introduction

During the revisionary studies on the legume flora of Kerala state, India, it was noticed that the description of *Crotalaria kurisumalayana* Sibichen & Nampy is not significantly different from that of *Crotalaria multiflora* (Arn.) Benth., to which it is closely allied (Sibichen & Nampy 2007). *Crotalaria multiflora* was originally collected from Sri Lanka (*Walker s.n.*, Herb.Hook. 1867, K!, Lectotype designated by Ansari, 2008. **Figure 1**). Therefore we decided to evaluate the species status of *C. kurisumalayana*.

Recently Ansari (2008) revised the genus *Crotalaria* L. for India and did not include *C. kurisumalayana* but cited a specimen labeled as *Sibichen M. Thomas 671*(CAL), collected from Idukki district,(erroneously given as Madurai district) Munnar at ± 1800 msl on 26. Dec. 2001 under *C. multiflora*. However Sibichen & Nampy (2007) have given the same collection number to another specimen from a different locality {*Sibichen & Nampy 671*(SJC), Kattappana to Elappara wayside, ±780m. 26. Dec. 2001} and cited it as a paratype of their species *C. kurisumalayana*. They confirmed that both are similar specimens and included both under their *C. kurisumalayana* (Pers. comm. 2011). From this account it is evident that under the same collection number, they collected two specimens from two different localities on the same day and gave same collection number as they were identical in some characters. Sibichen & Nampy collected the holotype of *C. kurisumalayana* from Kottayam district, Vagamon hills, Kurisumala, at ± 900 msl, on 1. November 2002, (*Sibichen & Nampy 732*, CAL, CALI, SJC!) and described it as a new species. Under this they included their earlier collection (*Sibichen & Nampy 671* SJC), with similar characters as a paratype.

Sibichen & Nampy (2007) described *Crotalaria kurisumalayana* as follows: “*C. kurisumalayana* haec habitu *Crotalaria multiflorae* valde affinis sed statura minore, habitu prostrato ramis serpentibus arcuatis, foliis rotundatis vel ovatis, racemis laxis et leguminibus sericeis ferrugineisque differt {“differs by smaller size, prostrate habit with trailing, arcuate branches; orbicular to obovate leaves; lax racemes and sericeous, ferruginous pods”.} Our study revealed that the above characters are highly overlapping and closer examination revealed that a varietal status can more appropriately be given to this ornamentally beautiful, endemic taxon by incorporating the variation noticed in very few character states (Table 1). We therefore reduced *C. kurisumalayana* to a variety of *C. multiflora*. The character states that are not consistent are not included in the key to the varieties.