



Taxonomic identity of *Torenia leucosiphon* (Linderniaceae) and its resurrection from the synonymy of *Torenia travancorica*

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Abstract

Taxonomic identity of *Torenia leucosiphon* is discussed. Perusal of literature shows that it has been treated as a synonym of *Torenia travancorica*. However, a detailed analysis of the type, additional specimens and protologue information of both taxa clearly indicates that *T. leucosiphon* should be treated as a distinct species. Therefore, *T. leucosiphon* is resurrected from the synonymy of *T. travancorica* and recognised as an independent species. Lectotypes of *T. leucosiphon* and *T. travancorica* were also designated. Detailed description, illustration, colour photographs, distribution and habitat notes of both *T. travancorica* and *T. leucosiphon* are provided along with a key to the Southern Peninsular Indian species of the genus *Torenia*.

Key words: Endemic, Southern Peninsular India, Southern Western Ghats, Tirunelveli, Travancore hills

Introduction

The genus *Torenia* Linnaeus (1753: 619) is well known for its horticultural values with its elegant and attractive flowers. It is among the most taxonomically difficult genera of the family Linderniaceae. As opined by Burt (1991), the generic delimitation of *Torenia* is problematic as it was not defined on a worldwide basis. Due to different emphasis in different regions, the generic circumscription was often been confused with *Vandellia* Linnaeus (1767: 384) and *Craterostigma* Hochstetter (1841: 668). Yamazaki (1955 a, b) separated *Torenia* from *Vandellia* on the size of the corolla whereas Saldanha (1966) followed the criterion proposed by Pennell (1943) that, in *Vandellia*, the sepals do not invest the capsule but have their tips somewhat spreading and in *Torenia* they invest the capsule completely. The generic circumscription of *Torenia* has changed a lot during the past few decades (Hepper 1987, 2008; Philcox 1987, 1990; Fischer 1989, 1992, 1995, 1997, 1999a, 1999b; Rahmzadeh *et al.* 2005). Recent work by Fischer *et al.* (2013) on the phylogeny of the Linderniaceae provides an updated and clearer circumscription of the genus *Torenia* with the addition of some taxa from the traditional genus *Lindernia* Allioni (1766: 178, t. 5). The modern circumscription of *Torenia* comprises more than 50 species with a palaeotropical but predominantly Asian distribution (Fischer *et al.* 2013). The genus *Torenia* is characterized by its pinnately veined leaves; a lax inflorescence with bracts resembling the vegetative leaves; tubular, winged or keeled bilipped calyx; abaxial stamens with spur-like filament projections; inner hairs present in the locules of the ovary; poricidous dehiscence of fruit and bothrospermous seeds (Fischer & Lachenaud 2013).

Regarding Indian species, Dutta (1965) reported seven species from eastern part of India and Saldanha (1966) reported seven species from Western Peninsular India. Perusal of literature and field observation in Southern Peninsular India shows that there are 12 species occurring in the area. Among these are four species, viz. *T. indica* Saldanha (1966: 126), *T. hirsuta* Willdenow (1800: 266), *T. courtallensis* Gamble (1923: 957), and *T. lindernioides* Saldanha (1966: 129), that are endemic to this region, confined to Western Ghats.

During floristic exploration for a revision of the family Linderniaceae in Southern Peninsular India, we collected a population of an elegant *Torenia* species from Travancore region of Southern Western Ghats, India. A critical examination of these specimens was carried out with relevant literatures and herbarium specimens and the results are given below.