

RESEARCH ARTICLE

MUNTINGIA CALABURA L. (MUNTINGINACEAE): A NEW GENERIC ADDITION TO THE FLORA OF MADHYA PRADESH, INDIA

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Abstract: The present paper deals with the genus *Muntingia* L. reported here as an addition to the Flora of Madhya Pradesh. The paper includes details of nomenclature citation followed by taxonomic descriptions, phenological data, and habitat along with colour photographs.

Keywords: Flora, Madhya Pradesh, *Muntingia calabura*

INTRODUCTION

Muntingiaceae C.Bayer, M.W.Chase & M.F.Fay is a small family of flowering plants in the order Malvales as per APG IV (2016), comprising three monotypic genera, Dicraspidia Standl. (*D. donnell-smithii*), *Muntingia* L. (*M. calabura*), and Neotessmannia Burret (*N. uniflora*). They were formerly placed in Tiliaceae or Elaeocarpaceae due to shared traits. Muntingiaceae was established for these genera because they possess unique features like leaves with asymmetric base, specific stipule dimorphism and trichomes, not found in those older families, establishing them as distinct within the Rosids (Bayer *et al.*, 1998).

The genus *Muntingia* was named by Carl Linnaeus in 1753 to honour Abraham Munting (1626–1683), a Dutch botanist and botanical artist. It is a monotypic genus with its sole member, *Muntingia calabura* L. native of Mexico to South Tropical America and introduced to tropical countries of Asia and Africa. The species has previously been reported in Indian states of Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh (Patel *et al.* 2016; Chaurasia *et al.*, 2024; Anand *et al.*, 2024). The authors, while working on the flora of Madhya Pradesh, collected a specimen of *Muntingia calabura* L. from the Jabalpur district of Madhya Pradesh. The identity was confirmed by consulting the relevant literature and authentic herbarium specimens. So far, the species was not reported from Madhya Pradesh (Verma *et al.*, 1993; Samvester 1996; Mudgal *et al.*, 1997; Khanna *et al.*, 2001; Jha & Khanna 2002; Khanna & Kumar 2007; Khanna *et al.*, 2009; Sikarwar *et al.*, 2010; Tiwari *et al.*, 2019), hence, the species is described here as a new generic record to the state flora of Madhya Pradesh with brief

description, phenology, habitat, and ecology along with photographs. The voucher specimens are deposited in the herbarium of Botanical Survey of India (BSA), Central Regional Centre, Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh, India.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The specimens were collected from Gwari Ghat locality in Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh. Field photographs and GPS location were recorded. The vegetative and reproductive features of the collected specimens were examined through a stereo-zoom binocular microscope (Motic SMZ-161). The identity of the species was confirmed through its protologue, and herbarium specimens. The photo plates were prepared using Adobe Photoshop software (version 7.0). The voucher specimens have been prepared following the protocol of Jain & Rao (1977), and all are deposited at the herbarium of Central Regional Centre, Botanical Survey of India, Prayagraj (BSA).

TAXONOMIC DESCRIPTION

***Muntingia calabura* L.**, Sp. Pl. 509. 1753; Manilal & Sivar., Fl. Calicut 54. 1982; Babu, Fl. Malappuram Dist. 90. 1990; S.K. Murti in B.D. Sharma & Sanjappa, Fl. India 3: 570. 1993; M. Reema *et al.* in P. Daniel, Fl. Kerala 1: 505. 2005; Sunil & Sivadasan, Fl. Alappuzha Dist. 146. 2009; Ratheesh Narayanan, Fl. Stud. Wayanad Dist. 175. 2009; D.D. Pramanick in A.A. Mao & S.S. Dash, Fl. Pl. India Annot. Checkl. Dicot. 1: 194. 2020. (Fig. 1)

Perennial, shrub or tree, 9–13 m tall. Stems erect, branched; branching horizontal, pendant towards tip, glandular, hairy. Leaves alternate, distichous, simple, petiolate; limana oblong or lanceolate, 3–16 × 1–7

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cm, dentate at margins, hairy and acute at apex, asymmetric at base; stipules 1 linear, ca. 5 mm long. Flowers in 1–3(–5)-flowered, supra-axillary fascicles, bisexual, pedicellate, white; pedicels 2–2.5 cm long. Sepals 5, lanceolate, valvate shortly connate at base, densely hairy, green. Petals 5, imbricate, ovate, obovate or suborbicular, crumpled in bud, white. Stamens many, yellow, ca. 1 cm long; filaments filiform; anthers yellow. Ovary superior, 4–5 mm long, ellipsoid, 5 locular; ovules numerous, minute; styles short; stigmas sessile, thick, capitate, ridged. Fruits berry, subglobular, 1–1.20 cm wide. Seeds ovoid, numerous, red, immersed in pulp.

Flowering & fruiting: Throughout the year.

Habitat: Disturbed lowland, forest edges, along roadside and waterbody margins.

Distribution: Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh (Present report), Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, and Uttar Pradesh.

Specimens examined: Madhya Pradesh, Jabalpur District, On the way to Gwari Ghat. 23.06'18"N, 79.59'06"E. Sanjay Mishra & B Lakshmanudu 82271 (5 sheets), BSA0000072704, 27.12.2024.

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Fig. 1: *Muntingia calabura* L. A. Habit; B. Flower; C. Twig; D. Fruiting Cycle.



Fig. 2: Herbarium specimen of *Muntingia calabura* L. at BSA

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