



On the occurrence of *Ipomoea imperati* (Convolvulaceae) on mainland India

Surveys and exploration of the Ganga River catchment areas were undertaken from Gomukh (Uttarakhand) to Gangasagar (West Bengal) under the National Mission for Clean Ganga project of the Ministry of Jal Shakti (Department of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation), New Delhi. Surveys were conducted in the pre-monsoon and post-monsoon seasons in 2023.

During the floristic survey in October 2023, unknown specimens of the Convolvulaceae family were collected from Uttar Pradesh: Varanasi Ghat (Varanasi District) and Dafi (Balija District) and Bihar State: Doriganj (Saran District) and Barh (Patna District), India. Further study of the vegetative and flowering parts of the specimens, and scrutiny of the literature: Clarke (1883), Duthie (1911), Stainton (1988), Polunin & Stainton (1988), Singh *et al.* (2019), Sinha *et al.* (2019) and Meena *et al.* (2020) revealed that they were specimens of *Ipomoea imperati* (Vahl). This is a littoral pantropic species previously reported from Andaman & Nicobar Islands (Naik *et al.* 2019). The herbarium specimens were deposited in the Patanjali Research Foundation (PRFH), Haridwar, Uttarakhand, India. Brief descriptions of its taxonomy, phenology, distribution, and habitat are provided below.

Ipomoea imperati (Vahl) Griseb., Cat. Pl. Cub.
203. 1866 (Figs. 1, 2)

Convolvulus imperati—Vahl 1790

Ipomoea imperati—Naik *et al.* 2019

Specimens examined. Uttar Pradesh (Varanasi District, Near Varanasi Ghat by I.P. Sharma, 691 on 23.03.2023; Ballia District, Dafi by Arun

Kushwaha, 848 on 24.03.2023); Bihar (Patna District, Patna by Harsh Singh, 1143 on 17.03.2023; Saran District, Doriganj by Uday Bhan Prajapati, 1220 on 21.03.2023; Patna District, Barh by Santosh Nautiyal, 1306 on 23.03.2023).

Redescription. Perennial, scrambling, herb creeping up to 5 m; stem concolor, glabrous and rooting at nodes. Leaves alternate, simple, 3–5 × 1.5–4.0 cm, linear, lanceolate, oblong, or ovate, fleshy, margin entire, cordate at base, blunt or notched to 2-lobed at apex; petiole 0.5–4.5 cm long. Flowers axillary, solitary, white to yellow; peduncle 2–3 cm long; bracts triangular, c. 2 mm long, lanceolate, green, glabrous; pedicel 1.0–1.5 cm long. Sepals 5, oblong, unequal, leathery, hairless, tip blunt or pointed, with a short point; outer 2 sepals 7–11 mm long; inner ones 1.0–1.5 cm long, apex obtuse to acute or mucronate, glabrous, pale green. Petals 5, 3.5–6.0 cm in diam., white with a pale-yellow tube and a dark reddish or purplish center, funnel-shaped, glabrous. Stamens 5, unequally arranged; staminal tube base thick, villous, white; anthers oblong, pale yellow; filaments white glabrous; pistil does not protrude out. Ovary superior, oblong, glabrous, pale green, 3-locular, many ovuled; style bilobed, slightly rigid; stigma bilobed, minutely ridged, white. Capsule spherical, c. 1 cm, enclosed with calyx, ellipsoid, glabrous. Seeds many, c. 8 mm, woolly, margin with longer hairs.

Phenology. February–May.

Ecology. Occasional; found along the roadsides in Gangetic Plains of eastern Uttar Pradesh and Bihar states of India in association with *Eragrostis pilosa* (L.) P.Beauv., *Evolvulus prostratus* B.L.Rob., *Malvastrum coromandelianum* (L.) Garcke., *Setaria verticillata* (L.) P. Beauv. *Sida acuta* Burm.f., *Solanum virginianum* L., etc.

Distribution. Tropical coasts of Andaman & Nicobar Islands; now Bihar and Uttar Pradesh.

Etymology. The generic name is based on the ancient Sanskrit name, which refers to the cavity in the flowers. The species epithet is based on the glabrous corolla. **Vedic Name:** Kuṭaranīkā aromadalā



Figure 1. *Ipomoea imperati* (Vahl) Griseb. flower and the natural habit (above & below)

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Figure 2. A herbarium sheet of *Ipomoea imperati* (Vahl) Griseb. deposited in Patanjali Research Foundation (PRFH 249405), Haridwar, Uttarakhand, India