



Short communication

Eleocharis spiralis (Rottb.) Roem. & Schult. (Cyperaceae): An addition to the flora of Andaman and Nicobar Islands

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Eleocharis R.Br. is a cosmopolitan genus of the family Cyperaceae which comprises about 200 species distributed in tropical, subtropical, and temperate regions of the world (Gonzalez-Elizondo & Peterson 1997, Mabberley 2009). Prasad & Singh (2002) mentioned about 21 species of this genus from India. During field expedition in Andaman Islands, the authors came across an interesting species of *Eleocharis* from Mangrove area behind the Corbyn's cove beach in Port Blair (South Andaman). On Critical study, perusal of literature and consultation of herbarium at PBL, the specimens were identified as *Eleocharis spiralis* (Rottb.) Roem. & Schult., a species widely distributed in the tropical regions of the world and in Indian states Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal (Cook 1996, Lakshminarasimhan 1996, Verma 2001, Prasad & Singh 2002). A thorough scrutiny of the literature (Rao 1986, Lakshminarasimhan & Rao 1996, Mathew 1998, Pandey & Diwakar 2008, Singh & Murugan 2014, Rasingam 2015) revealed that this species has so far not been reported from Andaman and Nicobar Islands. Hence, it is reported and described here as new record for Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

Eleocharis spiralis (Rottb.) Roem. & Schult., Syst. Veg. 2: 155. 1817.

(Fig. 1)

Scirpus spiralis Rottb., Descr. Icon. Rar. Pl. 45. 1773; Clarke in Hook. f., Fl. Brit. India 6: 627. 1893.

Perennial herbs with short rhizome. Stolons slender, with scales. Culms erect, pale green, densely tufted, 30–60 cm tall, 2–4 mm thick, firm, triquetrous, without transverse septa and nodes. Leaf sheaths membranous, 3 or 4, 3–16 cm long, smooth, slightly shiny; basalmost sheath purplish red to dark brown; cauline sheaths pale red, elongate, mouth obliquely truncate and parted, apex shortly acuminate with a setaceous appendage. Spikelets cylindrical, pale yellow, slightly broader than apex of the stem, 2–3.5 cm × 3–5 mm, many flowered, apex acute to obtuse. Glumes tightly and spirally arranged, basalmost glume empty, broadly triangular, amplexicaul for whole spikelet base; fertile glumes densely imbricate, subquadrate, ca. 3 × 3 mm, pale and brownish red punctulate striate, medially leathery and with a midvein, margin hyaline and minutely brown punctulate, apex truncate to subtruncate. Perianth bristles 4–6, reddish purple, linear, unequal in length, as long as or shorter than nutlet, laxly retrorsely spinulose. Stamens 3; anthers linear oblong, ca. 0.5 mm long. Stigmas 3. Nutlet yellowish green, turning dark brown when mature, obovoid to broadly obovoid, 1.2–1.5 × ~1 mm, compressed biconvex, obscurely cancellate with 17–20 rows of transversely oblong epidermal cells, margin narrow, apex not constricted but with an obscure annular thickening; persistent style base conic, basally gradually narrowed.

Flowering & fruiting: August–February.

Habitat: It is a perennial herb, grows in shallow water, restricted to brackish and saline localities towards coastal areas.

Distribution: India; Andaman and Nicobar Islands (Corbyn's cove beach, Port Blair, South Andaman), Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal. Worldwide distributed in Bangladesh, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Malesia, Thailand, South China, Australia, New Caledonia, Papua New Guinea, tropical Africa and tropical America.

Specimens examined: INDIA, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Port Blair, behind the Corbyn's cove beach, 8 m asl, N 11° 38'16.06" E 92° 40'00.01", 01.11.2015, *Sanjay Mishra* 32424 (PBL).

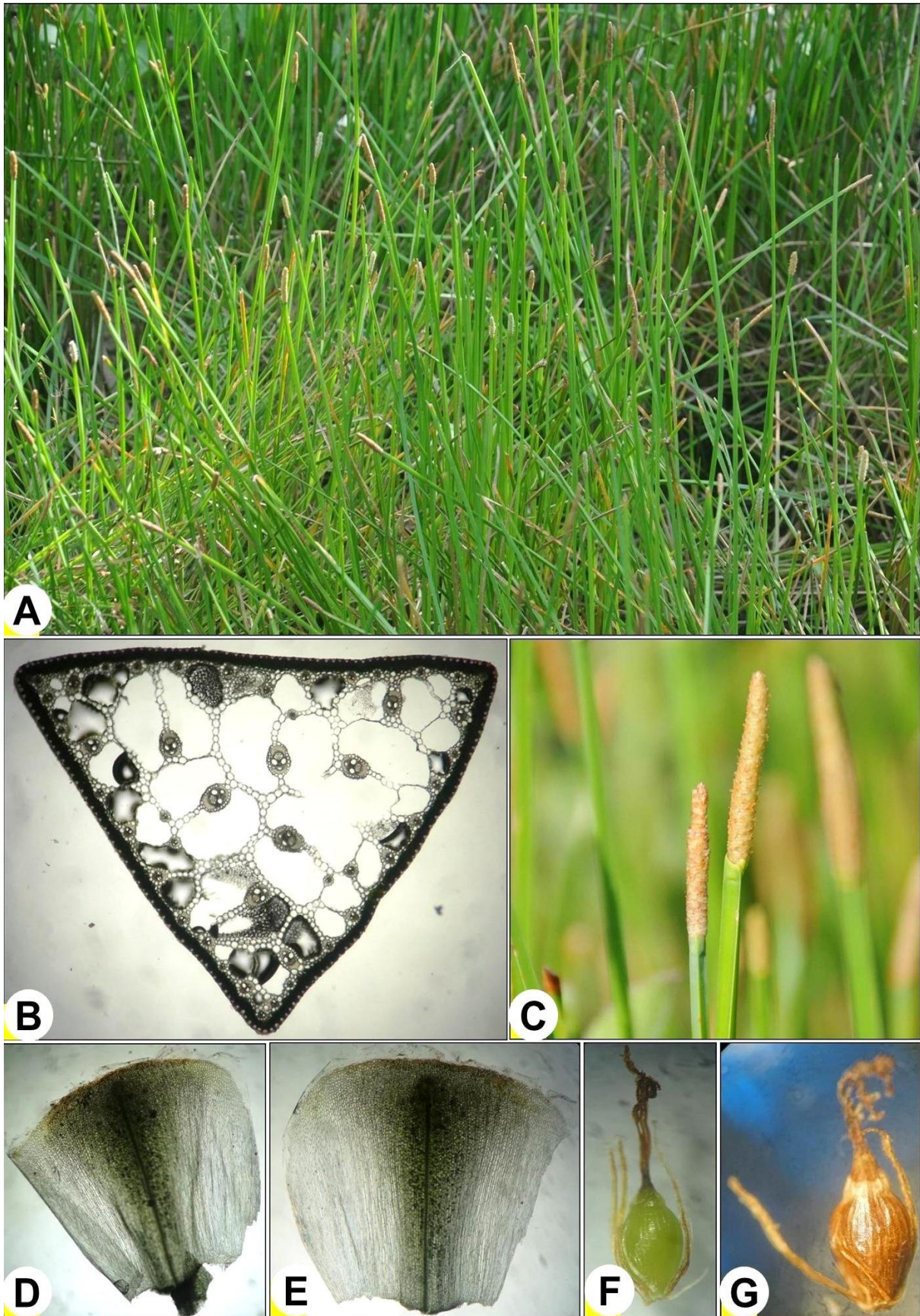


Figure 1. *Eleocharis spiralis* (Rottb.) Roem. & Schult.: **A**, Habit; **B**, Cross section at distal end of culm below the spikelet; **C**, Culms with spikelets; **D**, Glume, adaxial view; **E**, Glume, abaxial view; **F**, Flower; **G**, Nut.

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