

## **PHYLLANTHUS AMARUS SCHUMACH. AND THONNING (PHYLLANTHACEAE)- A NEW DISTRIBUTIONAL RECORD FOR THE KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA**

Santhosh Kumar, E.S.<sup>1</sup> and D. Vijayadas<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Jawaharlal Nehru Tropical Botanic Garden and Research Institute,  
Palode, Thiruvananthapuram district, Kerala 695562, India.

<sup>2</sup>Electro Saudi Services Ltd, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

### **Abstract**

*Phyllanthus amarus* Schumann. & Thonning has been reported for the first time from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. A detailed description, photographs, and a key to the genus occurring in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia are provided.

Key words: *Phyllanthus amarus*, New record, Riyadh, KSA.

### **INTRODUCTION**

During the study on the garden weeds in Riyadh, the second author collected *Phyllanthus amarus* from Janadiriah near Riyadh in Saudi Arabia. Perusal of literature [1-5] tell us that this species so far not recorded from the country, hence we reported this species here as a new distributional record for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

*Phyllanthus amarus* Shumach. & Thonn., Kongel. Danske Vidensk. Selsk. Skr., Naturvidensk. Math. Afh. 4: 195. (1829) (Fig.1)

Annual erect herbs, to 40 cm tall; stem woody at base, branched above, terete, glabrous throughout. Leaves distichous, blade elliptic-oblong, 4-9 x 2.5-5 mm, rounded at base, obtuse-rounded and slightly apiculate at apex, membranous, green above and pale beneath; lateral nerves 4-6 pairs, slightly visible abaxially and obscure adaxially. Male flowers: Sepals 5, elliptic or ovate, yellowish green, abruptly acute at apex; disc glands orbicular; stamens 3, filaments connate, anthers sessile, dehisces by oblique or horizontal slits. Female flowers: Sepals 5, obovate-oblong or ovate, obtuse or acute at apex, disc flat, orbicular, deeply 5-lobes; ovary globose-triangular, smooth, style free, erect or ascending. Capsules depressed globose, 1.2-2mm across, smooth, fruiting pedicels dilated at apex, 1-1.5 mm long. Seeds 6 per capsule, sharply 3-angled, light brown or yellowish brown.

**Flowering and fruiting:** April – January

**Specimen examined:** Saudi Arabia, Riyadh, Janadiriah, Salwa Garden Village, 10 January 2014, D Vijayadas 105.

**DISCUSSION:** The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is having five species of *Phyllanthus* viz. *P. maderaspatensis* L., *P. rotundifolius* Klein ex Willd., *P. tenellus* Roxb. var. *arabicus* Mull. Arg., *P. fraternus* G.L. Webster and *P. amarus*. Of these, *P. tenellus* var. *arabicus* is having 5 stamens in their male flowers and the rest of the species are having 3 stamens in their male flowers.

Key to the *Phyllanthus* species found in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia:-

- 1a. Male flowers with 5 stamens.....*P. tenellus* var. *arabicus*
- 1b. Male flowers with 3 stamens.....2
- 2a. Sepals 5.....*P. amarus*
- 2b. Sepals 6.....3
- 3a. Anthers dehiscing longitudinally, female disc glands free .....*P. maderaspatensis*
- 3b. Anthers dehiscing transversely; female disc annular or irregularly lobed.....4
- 4a. Leaves elliptic-oblong to elliptic-oblongate.....*P. fraternus*
- 4b. Leaves orbicular or broadly obovate to suborbicular.....*P. rotundifolius*



Fig.1. *Phyllanthus amarus* Schumacher and Thonning. A. Habit; B. A portion of the shoot enlarged.

#### REFERENCES

1. Migahid, A.,M., 1988, *Flora of Saudi Arabia*, Vol.1 (Third Edition), King Saud University, Saudi Arabia, pp. 252.
2. Collenette, S., 1985, *An illustrated guide to the flowers of Saudi Arabia*. Scorpion Publishing Ltd., London, pp. 514.
3. Collenette, S., 1999, *Wild Flowers of Saudi Arabia*, National Commission for Wildlife Conservation and Development, Riyadh, pp. 799.
4. Chaudhary S. A., 1999, *Flora of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia*, Ministry of Agriculture and Water, Riyadh, 1, pp. 691.
5. Chaudhary S. A., 2000, *Flora of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia*, Ministry of Agriculture and Water, Riyadh, 2 (Part 3), pp. 432.