

29. *FICUS SUPERBA* MIQ. AND *F. FERGUSONI* (KING) WORTHINGTON
(MORACEAE), TWO NEW REPORTS FROM INDIA

(With two text-figures)

Ficus (Moraceae) is one of the largest plant genera of the tropics which enjoys a cosmopolitan distribution. It includes an estimated 900-950 species (750 known) in 4 subgenera viz. *Urostigma* (Gasp.) Miq. *Pharmacosycea* Miq., *Sycomorus* (Gasp.) Miq and *Ficus* (Corner, 1965). India has a *Ficus* flora of 59 spp. (Corner, 1967). Two more species, *Ficus superba* Miq. and *F. fergusoni* (King) Worthington belonging to the subgenus *Urostigma* are now reported from India.

Ficus superba Miq., Ann. Mus. Lugd. Bot. iii - 287, 1867. Pl. Jungh. 46; fl. Ind. Bot. I, pt. 2 - 334. (Fig. 1).

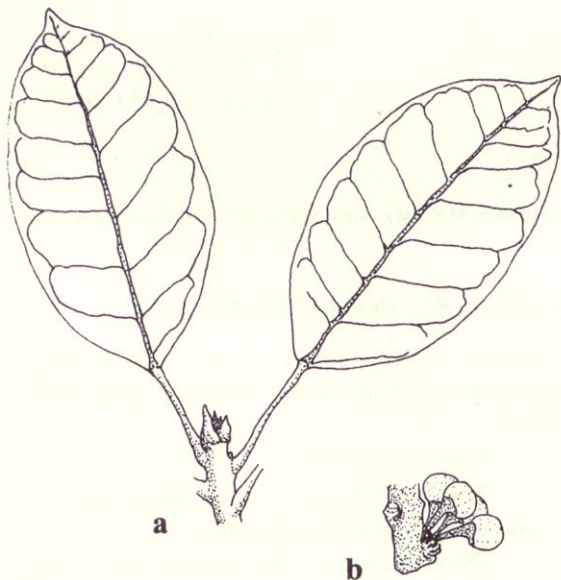


Fig. 1: *Ficus superba* Miq., a. leafy twigs
b. cluster of figs

Large glabrous stranglers, without aerial roots, up to a height of ca 20-25 m.; leaves in alternate helix, towards the tip of 0.5-0.7 cm wide twigs; stipules short, blunt, villous and caducous; petiole 5-9 cm long, always longer than the width of the lamina; lamina elliptic, acutely acuminate at apex, acumen 0.8-1 cm long, obtuse at base, 10-25 x 5.8 cm, dark green, glabrous, slightly coriaceous, entire, slightly undulating on the margin, 3 ribbed at the base, 8-10 pairs of lateral, slender, prominent nerves, middle ones at an angle of 60-80° to the midrib, brochidodromous, tertiaries percurrent, forked and convex. Figs in cauliflorous clusters of 2-6 (Fig. 1b), usually produced on short, perennial tubercles (small lateral shoots) borne on the older twigs well below the node, pedunculate, peduncle 0.5-1.0 cm, globose, 1.0-1.2 cm when ripe, green with pale spots in early stages, creamy white with pink spots in phase D and turning purple and becoming succulent in phase E; basal bracts 3, triangular and deciduous; male flowers ostiolar, sessile, monandrous, with double anther sacs and perianth of 3 tepals fused at the base.

Status: Indigenous, rare.

Distribution: Japan, China, Southeast Asia to Australia.

Exsiccates: HZDC (Herbarium, Dept. of Zoology, University of Calicut) - I/1, Kerala, Palghat, Shornur, coll. DRP. 6.ii.1991; HZDC - I/2, Kerala, Wynaad, Vaithiri, coll. DRP. 7.v.1991; HZDC - I/3, Kerala, University of Calicut, coll. DRP. 8.iii.1993.

F. fergusoni (King) Worthington, Ceylon trees f. 407. 1959; Corner, Gard. Bull. Singapore 21: 14. 1968.

MISCELLANEOUS NOTES

Ficus altissima Blume var. *fergusoni* King. Ann. R. Bot. Gard. Calcutta 1: 31, pl. 31, 1887; Trimen, Hand b. Fl. Ceylon 4 : 87, 1898. (Fig. 2).

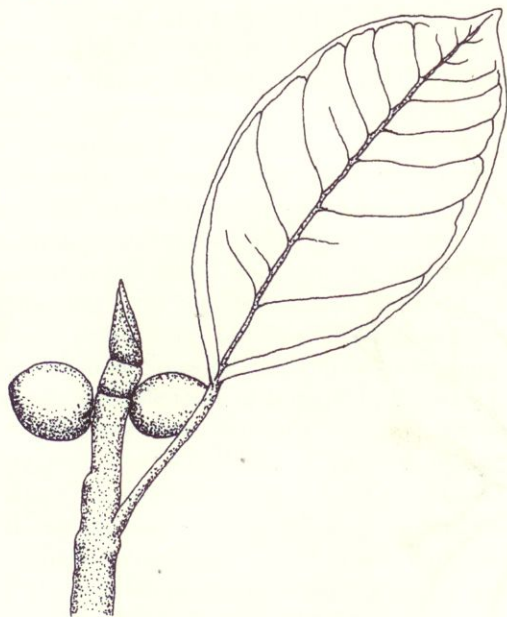


Fig. 2: *Ficus fergusoni* (King) Worthington; leafy twig with figs

Large, spreading, glabrous tree with many aerial roots. Leaves in helix on 0.5-0.8 cm wide twigs; stipulate lanceolate, acuminate, 1.5-2 cm long; petiole stout, 3-5 cm long; lamina thickly coriaceous, elongate - elliptic, acuminate at apex, obtuse at base, 8-18 x 6-9 cm, entire, 3 ribbed at base with 8-10 pairs of lateral nerves, those towards the middle at an angle of 50-70° to the

midrib, anastomosing submarginally. Figs sessile, paired in the leaf axils towards the tip, ellipsoid, 15-20 cm long, early stages not enveloped in calypteriform bracts, pale green in phase A-C, reddish yellow in phase D and orange red in phase E; male flowers dispersed, pedicellate, perianth of 4 tepals; gall and female flowers with gamophyllous perianth.

Status: Naturalised (?), rare

Distribution: endemic to Sri Lanka.

Exsiccate: HZDC - III/1 Kerala, Trivandrum, Ponmudi, coll. DRP, 9.x.1990.

Note: This is the first report of this species outside Sri Lanka.

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