

Rediscovery of *Uniyala multibracteata* (Gamble) H. Rob & Skvarla (Asteraceae) from the southern Western Ghats, India

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Robinson & Skvarla (2009) established the genus *Uniyala*, a group of seven shrubby species previously placed in *Vernonia*, distributed in southern India and Sri Lanka, characterized by four or five costate achenes and blunt sweeping hairs on the style branches. Out of the seven species, *Uniyala wightiana* (Arn.) H. Rob. & Skvarla is the only species found endemic to Sri Lanka, whereas *U. anceps* (C.B. Clarke ex Hook.f.) H. Rob. & Skvarla is distributed both in Sri Lanka and southern India. The rest of the five species, viz. *U. bourdillonii* (Gamble) H. Rob. & Skvarla, *U. comorinensis* (W. Smith) H. Rob. & Skvarla, *U. multibracteata* (Gamble) H. Rob. & Skvarla, *U. ramaswamii* (Hutch) H. Rob. & Skvarla and *U. salvifolia* (Wight) H. Rob. & Skvarla are endemic to southern India.

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Uniyala multibracteata was originally described as *Vernonia multibracteata* by J.S. Gamble in 1920. It was known only by a single collection made by Col. R.H. Beddome from Peermedu of the erstwhile Travancore State. Repeated searches to relocate the species in and around its type locality were futile, hence it was treated as an endangered species (Sasidharan 2004). During a floristic exploration to Bonaccord in the Agasthyamala Biosphere Reserve, *U. multibracteata* was rediscovered (Image 1). The identity was cross matched with the type material housed at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew (www.kew.org). It is described and illustrated here (Fig. 1).

Uniyala multibracteata (Gamble) H. Rob. & Skvarla, Proc. Biol. Soc. Washington 122(2): 153. 2009. *Vernonia multibracteata* Gamble, Bull. Misc. Inform. Kew 1920: 340. 1920 & Fl. Pres. Madras 675. 1921; Uniyal, B.P. in Hajra et al. (eds.) Fl. India 13: 374. 1995; Nayar, M.P. & A.R.K. Sastry (eds.) Red Data Book 1: 90. 1990; Sasidharan, N., Biod. Doc. Kerala. Part 6. Flowering Plants 258. 2004; Nayar T.S.



Image 1. *Uniyala multibracteata* (Gamble) H. Rob & Skvarla a - Habit; b & c - Close up of capitula

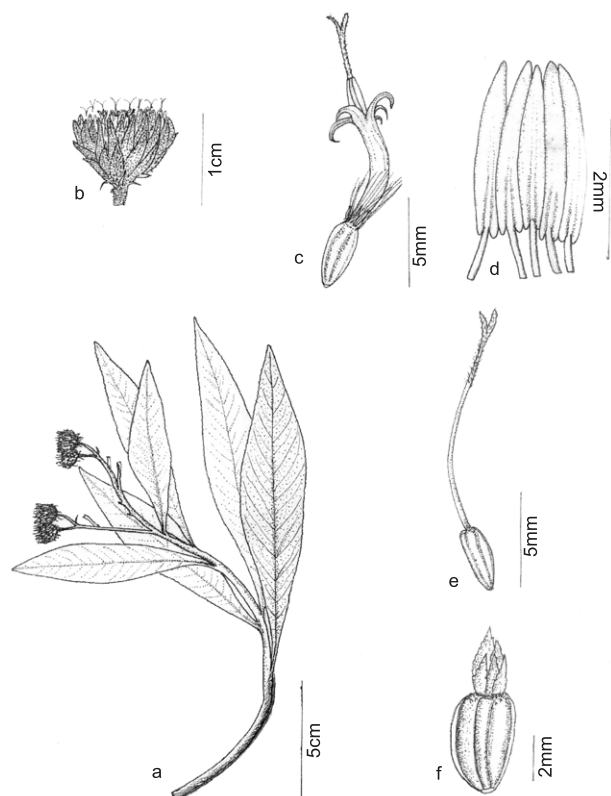


Figure 1. *Uniyala multibracteata* (Gamble) H. Rob & Skvarla
a - Habit; b - Capitulum; c - Flower; d - Androecium;
e - Gynoecium; f - Achene



Image 2. Herbarium of *Uniyala multibracteata*

et al., Fl. Pl. Kerala 125. 2006. (Fig.1. a–c; Fig.2.a–f.)

Specimens examined: 28.ii.1991, 1200m, Athirumala, Thiruvananthapuram District, Kerala, India, N. Mohanan 10462 (TBGT); 27.viii.1998, 1400m, ibid, Shaju & Kiran Raj 34769 (TBGT); 30.xii.2009, Merchiston, E.S. Santhosh Kumar & P.E. Roy, 69206 (TBGT) (Image 2).

Type: Southern India, Travancore, Peermedu, 1000m, Dec. 1880, Beddome, R.H. s.n. (Digital image, K).

Large shrubs or small trees, to 2m high; branchlets thick, white, lanate. Leaves 5–20 x 0.9–5 cm, lanceolate, acuminate at apex, attenuate-decurrent at base, crenulate at margin, densely white tomentose beneath, dark green and rugose above, lateral nerves 10–18 pairs, parallel and reticulate; petiole 1–2 cm long, thick, white-lanate. Capitula in terminal corymbs, 2–4 together covered with white-lanate tomentose hairs; each 10x10 mm. Flowers 30 or more per capitula, purple; peduncle 2–6 cm long; involucre bracts lanceolate, 1cm long; outer long acuminate, araneous, intermediate almost glabrous; inner smaller,

mucronate. Corolla cylindric, glabrous, to 4mm long; lobes short. Stamens 5; anthers 2.5–3 mm long, sagittate at base, exserted. Pollen grains prolate spheroidal, 39.2–49 x 39.2–47.6 μm , 3-zonocolporate, aperture circular, porate, exine lophate, 4.2 μm thick, surface lacunate, lacuna circular and elongate, supratectate, muri broad, surface spinate, spine to 3.2 μm long, blunt at tip. Ovary oblong, 2.7–3 mm long, narrowed at apex, glandular; style 9.5–10 mm long; stigma bifid, puberulent. Achene tetragonous, winged, glabrous, pappus hairs biciliate; outer paleaceous, fimbriate; interior bristles setaceous.

Flowering and fruiting: August–March.

Distribution: Endemic to the southern Western Ghats, Kerala.

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