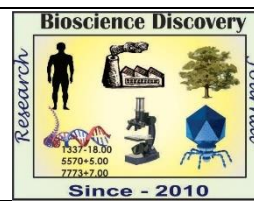


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**Research Article**



## *Pilea victoriae* V. Suresh & Sojan (Urticaceae)—A New Distributional Plant Record for Maharashtra State, India

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### Abstract

During an ethno botanical survey of Chandrapur district an interesting plant of Urticaceae family was collected as a weed on shady and moist places of gardens. After going through the literature plant species identified as *Pilea victoriae* V. Suresh & Sojan, it is found to be new record for Flora of Maharashtra State, India. A brief description with coloured photograph, phenological data, notes on its distribution provided here. Key is prepared for *Pilea* genus in Maharashtra state for its easy identification.

### INTRODUCTION

*Pilea* Lindley (1821) represented by ca.715 species and it is the most species rich genus in the family Urticaceae (Monro, 2004). *Pilea* genus distributed throughout the temperate, tropical and sub tropical regions with the exception of Europe, New Zealand and Australia. *Pilea* species are mainly succulent herbs, epiphytes and sub shrubs that grow in deep forest shade, caves, gorges and stream sides at altitudes between 1000 and 3000 m above sea level. *Pilea* genus easily distinguished from other genera of Urticaceae by the combination of opposite leaves and a single, ligulate, intra petiolar stipule in each leaf axil and pistillate flowers with a 3-5 parted asymmetrical perigonium (Monro *et al.*, 2012).

Morphological and phylogenetic center for *Pilea* is South East Asia and whilst an Andean countries and the Greater Antilles are the centers for species diversity (Monro, 2006). *Pilea* genus represented by 20 species from India (Santapau & Henry, 2005) and only four species including the current species under report *Pilea victoriae* V.

Suresh & Sojan, *P. melastomoides* (Poir.) Wedd., *P. microphylla* (L.) Liebm. and *P. pubescens* Liebm. has been reported from Maharashtra State (Singh & Karthikeyan, 2001; Almeida, 2003).

### MATERIALS AND METHODS

During an ethno botanical plant investigation an interesting specimen of *Pilea* was collected from two location as weed on shady and moist places of gardens from Chandrapur City. After perusing thorough survey of literature, critical examination and expert opinion, this specimen was determined as *Pilea victoriae* V. Suresh & Sojan. It is recently discovered as new species from Palakkad gap region of Western Ghats of Kerala (Jose *et al.*, 2017). As this species is recently discovered, so far not reported from Maharashtra state (Singh & Karthikeyan, 2001; Almeida, 2003). The present report of an occurrence of *Pilea victoriae* V. Suresh & Sojan as new distributional record to the flora of Maharashtra State, India.

A brief description with coloured photograph, phenological data, notes on distribution are provided. Taxonomic key is prepared for *Pilea* genus in Maharashtra state for its easy identification. Herbarium prepared (Voucher. No. 307) and deposited in the P.G.Dept. of Botany, Janata Mahavidyalya, Chandrapur, Maharashtra.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

**Taxonomic Description :** *Pilea victoriae* V. Suresh & Sojan, *Int. J. Adv. Res.* 5(8), 1636-1641, 2017.

Herb to 10 cm; epiphytic or epipetric. Stems prostrate then erect, pale grey-green or pale green-brown, semi transparent, glabrous, the raphides elliptic to punctiform; internodes 2.5–8 mm long, angulate in cross-section. Stipules 0.3 mm long, ovate, acute, pale green. Leaves petiolate, opposite, petioles at the same node sub-equal, 2–3.5 mm long, glabrous; lamina 2–4.5 × 2–3 mm, orbicular, apex minutely acute, base cuneate, margin entire; upper surface dark green, glabrous,

midrib depressed; lower surface pale grey-green, glabrous, glandular, midrib raised, base towards the middle of lamina. Inflorescences 6–15 per stem, unisexual; bracts 0.4–1.0 mm long; bracteoles 0.5–0.75 mm long. Staminate inflorescences 1 per axil, 1 mm long, bearing 2–4 flowers in a compact head; peduncle 0.4–0.5 mm long, glabrous; pedicels 0.15–0.2 mm long, glabrous. Staminate flowers 0.6 × 0.4–0.5 mm, Pinkish brown; tepals 4, 2.5 mm, glabrous, the sub apical appendage 0.75 mm, corniculate, glabrous; stamens 4. Pistillate inflorescences 1 or 2 per axil, 1.5–2 mm long, bearing 14–20 flowers in a compact head; peduncle 1–1.3 mm long, glabrous; pedicels ca. 0.25 mm long, glabrous. Pistillate flowers 0.75–1.0 mm long, adaxial tepal 0.675–1.25 mm, oblong, ellipsoid or ovoid, the dorsal tepal appendage ca 0.5 mm, oblong or ovate; the lateral tepals 0.5–0.675 mm, asymmetrically ovate. Inflorescence 2–2.5 × 1–1.5 mm; achenes 0.4–0.5 × 0.15 mm, compressed, ellipsoid.



**Fig.No.1.** *Pilea victoriae* V. Suresh & Sojan. **A**-Habit of plant. **B**-Stem prostrate, rooting at base and erect. **C**-Flowering Twig. **D**-Dorsal side of leaf. **E**-Ventral side of leaf. **F**-Pistillate inflorescence.

**Phenology:** Throughout the year under favorable natural conditions.

**Distribution:** Palakkad district and Perinthalmanna region of Malappuram district, Kerala. Now From Chandrapur City, Chandrapur District, Maharashtra, India.

**Specimens Examined:** India. Maharashtra State. Chandrapur City, Civil line area as weed on shady and moist places (GPS location- 19°07'22.2"N, 79

°28'68.8"E. Collected by U.B.Deshmukh on dated 17, October 2017.

**Note:** This species is endemic to Palakkad district and Perinthalmanna region of Malappuram district, Kerala, India. Now it is collected first time other than its type locality. It is easily identified by its erect stem with basal branching and orbicular leaf blade of equal or sub-equal size at each node.

#### Key to the genus *Pilea* in Maharashtra

1a. Leaves 3-nerved, serrate margin.

2a. Plant herb, stem decumbent to descending, pubescence, leaves bronz-green above and reddish below.....*Pilea pubescens*

2b. Plant shrub or under shrub, stem erect, glabrous, leaves green from both upper and lower sides .....*Pilea melastomoides*

1b. Leaves 1-nerved, entire margin.

3a. Stems drooping or ascending, inter nodal branching present, leaf blade elliptic-obovate, stipule triangular ..... *Pilea microphylla*

3b. Stem prostrate then erect, inter nodal branching absent, leaf blade orbicular, stipule ovate ..... *Pilea victoriae*

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