

Research Article

A NEW SPECIES OF CYCAS FROM INDIA

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ABSTRACT

Cycas sainathii R.C.Srivast., *sp. nova*, from India is described and illustrated.

INTRODUCTION

During the course of studies on Gymnosperms of India, the author came across some population of *Cycas* which seem to be undescribed as revealed by scrutiny of the Indian Herbaria and relevant literature (Lindstrom and Hill 2007). The same is described and illustrated as under:



Plate I: Photos 1-6: *Cycas sainathii* R.C. Srivast.*sp. nova*. 1: Habit; 2: armoured trunk with bulbils; 3: foliage; 4: Leaflets and megasporophylls; 5: megasporophyll; 6: ovule

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Cycas sainathii R.C.Srivast.sp. nova Plate I (Photos 1-6)

Allied to *Cycas zeylanica* but differs in having entire margined, glabrous, lanceolate mature megasporophylls with central ridge and long acuminate apices (rarely partly- fimbriate or some times with 3 ladder like teeth on each side of the sporophyll); fulvous tomentose when young, turning glabrous (green) on maturity and apically notched ovules

Trees, some times giving shrubby appearance due to many trunks arising from the basal portion; trunks slender (less robust as compared to *C. zeylanica*), armoured, up to 3m high, bearing crown of leaves on top, with bulbils on sides. Leaflets c. 28-29 x 4.5-4.7 cm, dark green; petioles with broad based spines. Mature megasporophylls lanceolate, c. 39cm long, with a distinct central ridge, sub-glabrous, green, entire margined, with long acuminate apices; (rarely partly- fimbriate or with 3 ladder like teeth on each side of the sporophyll-blade) fulvous tomentose when young, turning glabrous (green) on maturity, with c. 6 ovules on each megasporophyll; ovules apically notched, dark green, glabrous, borne on opposite/sub-opposite (upper 2 pairs) or alternately placed (lower pair) on each side of the sporophyll-blade.

Holotype: West Bengal: Howrah district, Shibpur, AJCBIB Garden, R.C. Srivast. cy 201, dated-6 Feb. 2014 (CAL).

Distrib.: INDIA: population in Type locality seems to be planted; probably introduced from Andaman & Nicobar Isls.

Etymology. The species is named in honour of Sirdi ke Sai Baba with whose blessings this work has been possible.

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REFERENCES

Lindstrom AJ and Hill KD (2007). The genus *Cycas* (Cycadaceae) in India, *Telopea* 11(4) 463-488.