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:

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.


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