

"VITEX NEGUNDO L. VAR. INCISA (LAM.) C.B. CLARKE (LAMIACEAE): AN OVERLOOKED SPECIES FROM KARNATAKA, INDIA"

Abstract

The present species rank is reduced to synonymy under *Vitex negundo* L. after critical examination, the author is presenting as a distinct variety of *V. negundo* L. and the present collection found new distribution record for the state. The colour photographs and description is being provided for clarification.

Keywords: Variety, Vitex, Chikodi, Raibag, Karnataka

Author

Mallikarjun S. Yadawade
Shri. Mallikarjun Ashram Trust's
Department of Zoology
Shivanand College, Kagwad
Belagavi, Karnataka.

I. INTRODUCTION

Around 250 species of *Vitex* L. (Linnaeus 1753:) [1] are found throughout the world's tropical regions [2]. The genus *Vitex* has 12 species, 10 variations, and 5 formae in India [3]. Based on its cymose inflorescences, *Vitex* was previously categorised in the Verbenaceae, subfamily Viticoideae [4]. The genera of subfamily Viticoideae (e.g. *Callicarpa*, *Clerodendrum*, *Tectona* and *Vitex*) have been placed in the Lamiaceae based on DNA sequence and are better placed in Lamiaceae [5].



Figure 1. *Vitex negundo* L., A. Habit, B. Flowering branch, C. Close-up view of Flowering branch, D. Immature Drupes, E. Mature Drupes, F. Dry Drupes

During regular floristic exploration surveys in 2018–19, a species of *Vitex* L. was observed in Chikodi, Raibag tahsils of Belagavi, Karnataka, India. After critical examination and relevant taxonomic literature, it was identified as *Vitex negundo* L. var. *incisa* (Lam.) C.B. Clarke (see Figure 2) [6,7,8]. and compared with *Vitex negundo* L. (Figure 1). The identified specimen has been cross verified with Kew Herbarium catalogue (K001114063). The gathered specimens were prepared, and then deposited in the Herbarium Department of Botany, Government First Grade College, Raibag, Belagavi, Karnataka. The species is distributed in the hedges of field bunds and water canals throughout areas such as Raibag,

Chikoid, Ankali, Belagavi district of Karnataka (Figure 3). The *Vitex negundo* L. var. *incisa* was first described by the C.B. Clarke based on the collection from Lamarck [9]. In the protologue, it was stated that the species placed as a synonym under *Vitex negundo* L. [3]. After a detailed analysis of morphological characters, it was observed that, both species have considerable characters differences between these two species (Table 1) and hence the present collection seems to be new record for the flora of Karnataka State. Therefore the current name should be treated as a distinct variety under *Vitex negundo* L.

II. TAXONOMIC DESCRIPTION



Figure 2. *Vitex negundo* L. var. *incisa* (Lam.) C.B. Clarke, A. Habitat, B. Flowering branch, C. Fruiting branch, D. Adaxial surface of a leaf, E. Abaxial surface of a leaf, F. Drupes.

Vitex negundo L. var. **incisa** (Lam.) C.B. Clarke. in Hook.f. Fl. Brit. India 4: 584. 1885; Prasanna in Singh et al. Fl. Maharashtra St. Dicot. 2: 699. 2001; Yadav and Sardesai, Fl. Kolhapur 376. 2002. *V. incisa* Lam. Dict. 2: 611. 1788. **Figure 2.**

Shurbs or small trees, 4-6 m high, stem and branches slender, pubescent, node annulate, internode 2-10 cm long. Leaves 3 foliate; petiole 2-4.5 cm long, canaliculated, pulvinous at base, pubescent; leaflets elliptic to lanceolate, acute sometime cuneate at base, acuminate apex, entire to crenate or serrate margins; terminal leaflets 3-7 x 1-3 cm, petiolues 0.5-1.5 cm long; lateral leaflets 1.5-5 x 0.5-2 cm, petioules 1-3 mm long; characterous, glabrous above, pale pubescent beneath; lateral nerves 11-15 pairs, pinnate venation, acute at margin distinct on both surface, midrib prominent. Panicles in terminal cyme, dichotomously branched, 4-15 cm long, rarely simple, peduncles cylindrical, 1-2 cm long, pubescent, bract foliaceous, elliptic-lanceolate. Flowers pale violet, pedicels 10-13 mm long, fine hairy. Calyx campanulate, ca 3 x 2 mm, calyx 5 toothed, tooth acute, ca 1-2 mm long, pubescent outside, glabrous inside, persistent. Corolla infundibuliform, white to pale violet, covered with appressed hairs, 5 lobed, 2 lipped, upper lip bilobed, with ovate lobes, acute, ca 1-2 mm long; lower lip 3 lobed; middle lobe obovate, entire, concave, 3 mm long; lateral lobes ovate, acute, ca 1 mm long; tube 2-4 mm long, two prominent ridges at the mouth of the corolla, throat heavily villous, pubescent outside. Stamens 4, didynamous, slender, inserted halfway on the corolla tube, filaments 1-4 mm long, pale purple or white, exserted, glabrous above, densely villous at base, anther oblong, ca 1 mm long, divaricate, basifixed. Ovary globose, 1 x 2 mm, glabrous, style slender, ca 8 mm long, exserted, glabrous; stigma 2 lobed, lobes subulate. Drupe ellipsoid, 2-4 x 2.5-3 mm, turn black when mature, fruiting calyx covering the mature fruit, 2-2.5 mm in diameter, pubescent in nature.

III. FLOWERING AND FRUITING TIME

February-March and July-August

IV. DISTRIBUTION

Maharashtra: Raigad district, Satara district and Kolhapur district

V. HABITAT AND ECOLOGY

Occasional on the hedges of field bunds and water canals and on waste places around villages

VI. SPECIMEN EXAMINED

India, Karnataka, Belagavi Dt., Ankali-Naslapur, 22 Feb 2020, MSY 101.

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Table 1: Comparison of Key Morphological Characters: Vitex Negundo L. Var. Negundo Vs Vitex Negundo L. Var. Incisa (Lam.) C.B. Clarke.

Sl. No.	Character	<i>Vitex negundo</i> L. var. <i>negundo</i>	<i>Vitex negundo</i> L. var. <i>incisa</i> (Lam.) C.B. Clarke.
1	Stem and branches	Obtusely 4-angular	Cylindrical
2	Leaves	3-5 foliate	Strictly 3 foliate
3	Leaflet margin	Entire	Entire or crenate-serrate
4	Terminal leaflet	5-15 x 2.5-4 cm	3-7 x 1-3 cm
5	Panicle	12-28 cm long	4-15 cm long
6	Peduncle	Obtusely 4-angular	Cylindrical
7	Ovary	Oblong	Globose
8	Drupe	Subglobose	Ellipsoid

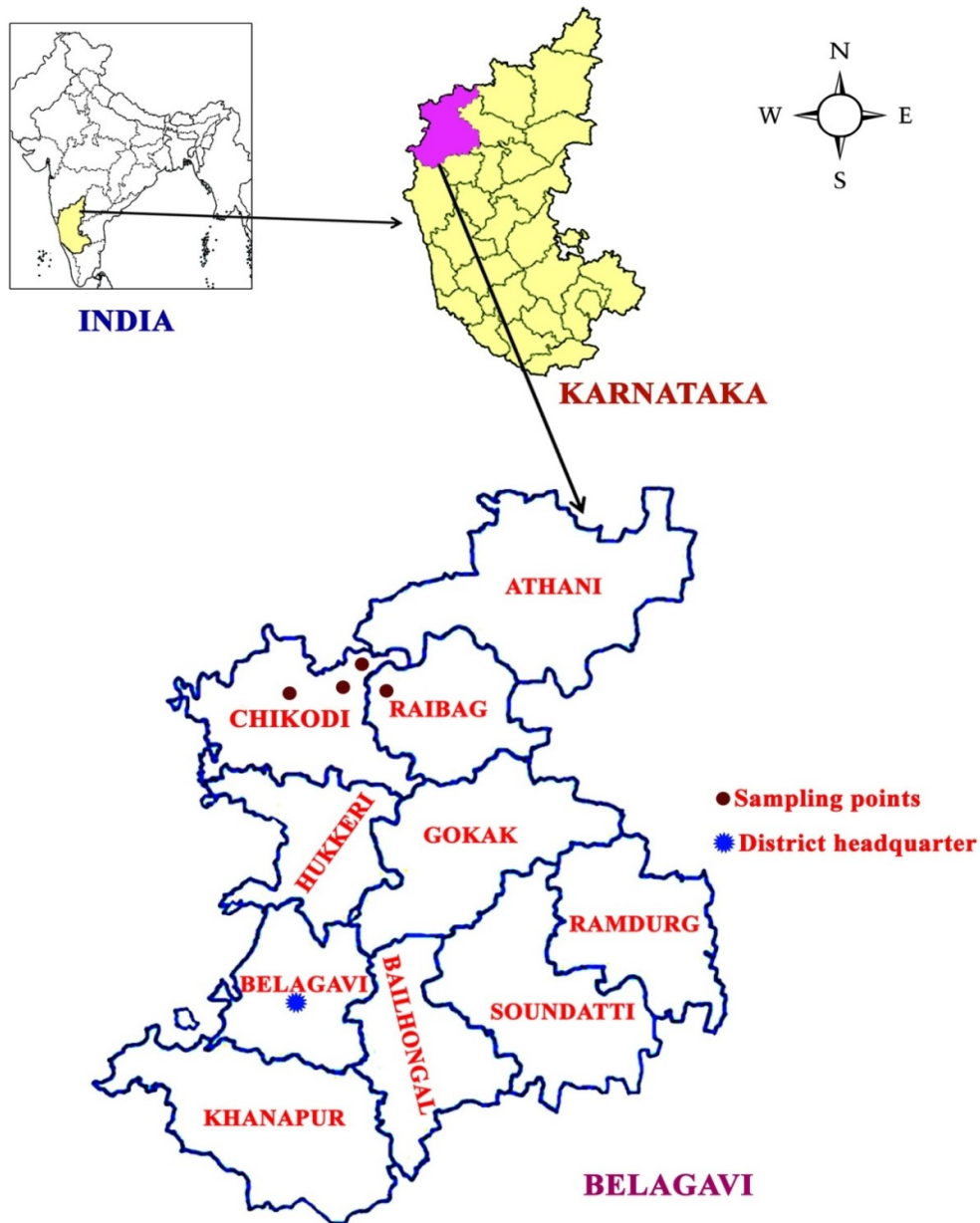


Figure 3: Map of India showing Karnataka, map of Karnataka showing location of Belagavi District, map of Belagavi District showing location of sampling points.