

## *Impatiens sahyadrica* sp. nov (Balsaminaceae)—a new species from southern Western Ghats, India

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### Abstract

*Impatiens sahyadrica* (Balsaminaceae), a new scapigerous balsam from Silent Valley National Park, southern Western Ghats is described and illustrated. The new species is phenotypically similar to *I. lawsonii*. However, it differs from the latter in its smaller flowers; oblong, free upwardly curved basal lobes of the lateral united petals; smaller dorsal auricle and curved spur. A detailed description, notes on distribution, biotic association and relevant taxonomic notes are provided along with colour photographs and illustrations.

**Key words:** Evergreen forest, Scapigerae, *Impatiens*, Silent Valley National Park

### Introduction

Balsams or “jewel weeds” comprising the family Balsaminaceae are mainly distributed in the tropical and subtropical regions of the old world as well as in the Northern temperate regions (Mabberley 2008). The family comprises more than 1000 species (Mabberley 2008) with two genera: *Hydrocera* Blume (1825: 241) ex Wight & Arnott (1834: 140) and *Impatiens* Linnaeus (1753a: 937). *H. triflora* (Linnaeus 1753b: 938) Wight & Arnott (1834: 140) is the only species in the genus *Hydrocera* and is distributed from Sri Lanka, India to Java, South Borneo and Sulawesi (Grey-Wilson 1980). In India, the genus *Impatiens* is represented with more than 210 species (Bhaskar 2012). The concentration of the genus is remarkably localised, as it occurs in Himalayas, North-East India and Western Ghats. Among the 106 species and 13 varieties of *Impatiens* reported from South India, 103 species and 13 varieties are endemic to Western Ghats (Bhaskar 2012). Altogether 88 taxa of *Impatiens* were reported from the Kerala part of Western Ghats, among them 73 are endemic to this region (Bhaskar 2012, Sasidharan 2013). In India, scapigerous *Impatiens* form a peculiar section ‘Scapigerae’ (Grey-Wilson 1980, Vivekananthan & al. 1997) are restricted to the Western Ghats-Sri Lankan Biodiversity Hotspot with 28 species (Bhaskar 1981, 2012). Except for *I. acaulis* Arnott (1836: 325), all the other species are restricted to Western Ghats.

The Nilgiri phytogeographical region has the second highest concentration of *Impatiens* in the Western Ghats with 30 species of which 21 are endemics (Bhaskar 2012). Silent Valley is the core area of Nilgiris, a rich biodiversity mountainous zone in India and type locality of few *Impatiens*, i.e., *I. denisonii* Beddome (1864: 41), *I. gardneriana* Wight (1846: t 1050) and *I. munronii* Wight (1840: 160). Among them *I. denisonii* and *I. munronii* are endemic to Sipsara Ghats.

During a recent floristic exploration in Silent Valley National Park, the authors have collected an interesting specimen. Critical taxonomic studies with the perusal of the relevant literature (Bhaskar 1981, 2012, Grey-Wilson 1980, Dessai & Janarthnam 2011) revealed that the specimen is quite distinct from hitherto known scapigerous species of *Impatiens*, hence it is described and illustrated here as a new species. A detailed description, notes on distribution, biotic association and relevant taxonomic notes are provided along with colour photographs and illustrations.