

Markhamia zanzibarica (Bojer ex DC.) K. Schum. A new exotic beauty for India

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ABSTRACT

Markhamia zanzibarica, a small, tropical tree with striking flowers and decorative fruits, is reported for the first time in India, together with *Vitex peduncularis*, *Xylosma longifolia*, *Cassia multijuga* and *Kigelia africana* from Forest Research Institute, Dehradun. The specific epithet *zanzibarica* is given for Zanzibar, the island lying 36 km. off the Tanzanian coast in the Indian Ocean.

Key Words: *Markhamia zanzibarica*, Bignoniaceae, Dehradun.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Markhamia (Family: Bignoniaceae) was named by Berthold Seeman, in honor of his friend Sir Clements Robert Markham (1830-1916), English geographer and traveller, who introduced the famous quinine-yielding *Cinchona* into India. This Taxon is native to Southern Africa and is distributed from Malawi, Tanzania to South Africa. There are 10 species in tropical Africa and Asia. In India, one species is reported till 2012 namely *Markhamia lutea* (Benth) K. Schum. There are now two species namely *M. lutea* and *M. zanzibarica*. *Markhamia zanzibarica* is reported for the first time in India from Forest Research Institute, Dehradun. The critical review of literature reveals that the work on Angiosperm floras covering South Africa and other parts of the world was undertaken by various workers in the past viz., (Bailey 1949; Ross 1976; Palgrave 1992; Diniz 1988; Leistner 2000; Schmidt et al. 2002; Hyde et al. 2013) and Web site (www.plantzfrica.com/plantklm/markhamiaz.htm).

2. DESCRIPTION

A shrub 2-5 m tall or a small often straggling tree up to 9 m tall. Bark grey, smooth or rough, peeling off soon. Young branchlets minutely pediculate, sometimes with conspicuous lenticels. Leaves up to 35 cm long, opposite, compound and imparipinnate, 2-4 pairs of leaflets plus a terminal one. The lowermost pair is the smallest and each pair increases in size towards the terminal leaflet. Leaflets often have fine yellow- coloured hairs especially on the lower surface. Leaflets are medium, elliptic, ovate or obovate or almost sub- circular, sessile or with petiolules up to 5 mm long, acute or acuminate to long acuminate; lateral nerves 6-12 (14), impressed above and prominent below; margins entire or finely toothed. Inflorescence a terminal or axillary panicle

or raceme rather lax, 5-20 (23) cm long, scaly glabrous or puberulous; pedicel up to 1.5(2) cm long, 2-bracteate below the middle; bracts 2-5 (7) mm long, triangular acuminate, ciliate at the margins. Calyx 10-15 (19) mm long, cuspidate or uncinately splitting at one side down to 8 mm from the base sometimes provided with scattered glands towards the apex and opposite to the fissure. Corolla funnel shaped to campanulate, tube (18) 20-30(43) mm long, yellow- greenish flecked with maroon; lobes 10-15mm in diam., subcircular, sometimes with conspicuous small glands near mouth. Stamen- filaments 9-14mm long, adnate to the corolla tube up to ca. 5mm from the base, corolla tube provided with pluricellular hairs at the insertion points of the filaments; anther-thecae ca. 1.5 mm long, divergent. Disk 1.5 mm long and 2-3mm in diam. Ovary 3.5mm long, sometimes lepidote; style 15-27mm long, stigma bilipped. Fruit a capsule slender, 22-38X.9-1.5cm straight or slightly falcate, glabrous, lenticillate. Seeds 4-6X20-40mm. including the wings (Image 1 & 2).

Flowering: July- September

Fruiting: October- December

Uses:

Wood is used for roof timber and implements handles. Roots are roasted and ground into a powder, which is rubbed into incised skin to relieve backache.

Distribution and Habitat:

Native to tropical Africa and within southern Africa it is found in the Caprivi region of Namibia, Northern Botswana, most of Zimbabwe, Northern Mozambique and Northern South Africa (Limpopo province). It is found along the fringes of



Image 1



Image 2

rivers and on rocky outcrops and hillsides in its native regions.

3. RESULT & DISCUSSION

This taxon is new to India and not selected in any of screening processes. Botanical garden systematics tackles

some of the diverse, ecologically important and complex groups of plants. The systematic study of *Markhamia zanzibarica* and other exotic genus of the family Bignoniaceae will allow garden scientists, evolutionists to develop models for revealing evolutionary mechanisms and biogeography in India.

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