

NEW DESCRIPTIONS

A NEW SPECIES OF *PTERIS* L. (PTERIDACEAE: PTERIDOPHYTA)
FROM WESTERN GHATS OF SOUTH INDIA¹S. DOMINIC RAJKUMAR²¹Accepted June, 2002²Sri Paramakalyani Centre for Environmental Sciences, Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, Alwarkurichi 627 412, Tamil Nadu, India. Email: dominicraj_in@yahoo.com

A new species of the genus *Pteris* from the Western Ghats ranges of Karnataka and Tamil Nadu is described and illustrated.

Key words: *Pteris manickami*, *Pteris* L., Pteridaceae, Western Ghats, South India

INTRODUCTION

Pteris Linn. is a pantropical, warm temperate genus with about 280 species (Copeland 1947). Holttum (1954) included 250 species in this genus, while Tryon and Tryon (1982) accredited only 200. In India, about 50 species are known (Dixit 1984). Manickam and Irudayaraj (1992) have recorded about 15 species in the Western Ghats, South India. The new species *Pteris manickami* distinctly varies from all the other 50 Indian species and particularly the allied species *Pteris confusa* T.G Walker (RHT 32560, 32632, 32698).

Pteris manickami is exceptional in having the basal-most pair of pinnules or lobes reduced in all the pinnae.

Pteris manickami sp. nov.

(Fig. 1)

Description: Rhizome erecto, stipitibus 20-65 cm longis, stramineis; laminis obscure viridis, late ovatis, 56 cm longis. Pinnae usque ad 20-25 pares, subsessiles, oppositae. Pinnae pinnatifidae, ad 2/3, Pinnae maximae 12 x 4 cm, oblongae cum 12 to 20 paribus loborum, lobae basalis, par deminuta, costa et nervaturum hirsutae sparsim infra pinnam, margo cum pilis, dispersis. Venis liberis 9-15. Sporae tetrahedro - globosis, c. 46 µm in diametro. Sporae abortivisque intermixtis.

Rhizome erect, stipe 20-65 cm long, stramineous. Lamina green, ovate, 56 cm long. Pinnae 20-25 pairs, subsessile, opposite. Pinnae pinnatifid, lobed 2/3 to the costa. Pinna 12 x 4 cm maximum size, oblong with 12 to 20 pairs of lobes. Basal-most pair of lobes reduced. Costa and margin of the lobes sparsely hairy. Veins free, 9-15 pairs. Spores tetrahedro - globose, c. 46 µm in diameter. Spores aborted and intermixed.

Holotype: Devigar - Nagarigar path, Karnataka state, 900-1,200 m, 27.xii.1992, Manickam, XCH 2942.

Paratype: Maramalai hills, Tamil Nadu state, 700-1,100 m, 10.i.1998 Rajkumar, XCH 3715.

Etymology: The specific epithet honours Rev. Dr. V.S. Manickam, S.J., a pioneer in South Indian ferns, who was instrumental in establishing the St. Xavier's College Herbarium (XCH), one of the largest herbaria in India for ferns, with about 40,000 specimens.

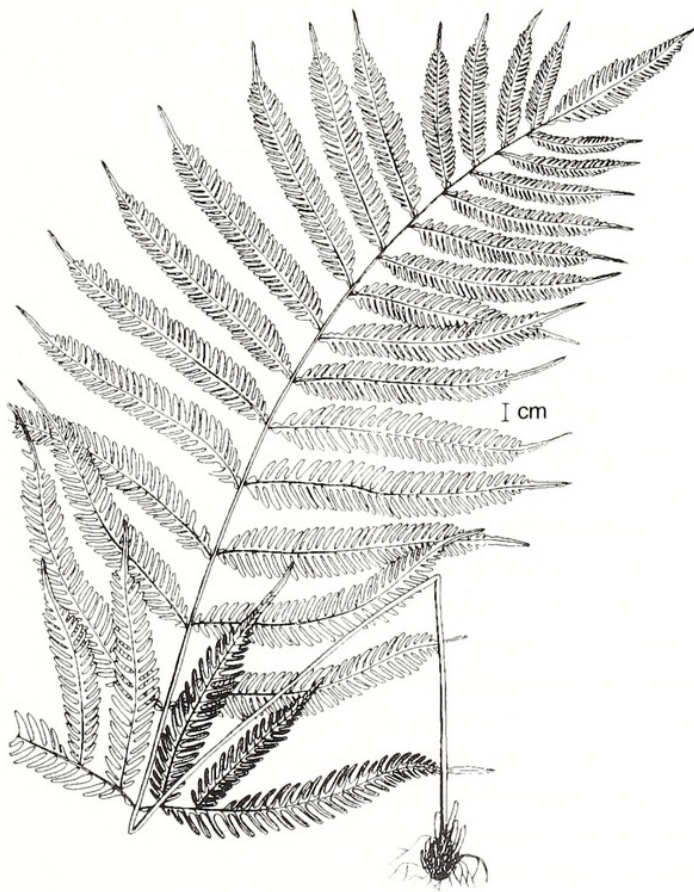


Fig. 1: Bipinnate frond of *Pteris manickami* Rajkumar sp. nov. showing reduced basal-most pair of pinnules in all the pinnae

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