



Original Research Article

A New Species of Indian *Cycas*

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Abstract	Keywords
<p>A new species of <i>Cycas</i>, <i>C. pschannae</i> R.C. Srivast. & Lalji Singh <i>sp. nov.</i> first recorded in West Bengal, India during 2001 has been described in this article. Many populations of this species have been recently (2014) found in Andaman Islands. Allied to <i>Cycas zeylanica</i> and <i>Cycas sainathii</i> R.C.Srivast. but differs significantly in morphology of the megasporophylls which posses two lateral horn like teeth at the base of the sterile portion of the fertile megasporophylls.</p>	<p>Indian <i>Cycas</i> Megasporophylls New species</p>

Introduction

During the course of studies on Gymnosperms of India under Flora of India Project of BSI, the author observed many magnificent samples of *Cycas* trees in the garden which were introduced in this garden long back but never studied closely. During 2001, one of such small trees which is growing in Charak Udyan produced apically born female cone like structure i.e., group of compact brownish-yellow megasporophylls which later on loosened with the age.

After scrutiny of the literature [De Laubenfels and Adema (1998), Donaldson (2003), Haynes (2011), Hill (2008), Hill (2004), Hill (2004), Lindstrom and Hill (2007), Lindstrom and Hill (2002), Lindstrom et al. (2008), Lindstrom et al. (2009), Sahni (1990), Singh and Srivastava (2013), Srivastava (1993), Srivastava (2014) and critical study of type specimens/images and freshly collected specimens, it was found to be an undescribed new taxon. Later on during a trip to Andaman Islands during July 2014, several populations

of such trees were recorded. It is described here as under:

Cycas pschannae R.C. Srivast. & Lalji Singh *sp. nov.*

Fig. 1: Holotype: West Bengal, Howrah dr, AJCBIBG, RCS Cy 19(CAL)

Allied to *Cycas zeylanica* and *Cycas sainathii* R.C.Srivast. but differs significantly in morphology of the megasporophylls which posses two lateral horn like teeth at the base of the sterile portion of the fertile megasporophylls.

Trees, up to 12 m high, trunk up to 30 cm in diameter not swollen at base; Plants some-times branched at base, giving rise to two trunks. Leaves dark green, glassy glabrous above, paler beneath, up to 205 cm long, with 82-115 pairs of leaflets, leaflets up to 24×1.5 cm acute at apices; petioles up to 65 cm long, glabrous, spinescent, Fertile megasporophylls up to 45 cm long, with 2-3 pairs of laterally born ovules yellowish-brown. tomentose; Upper sterile part of lamina triangular, with

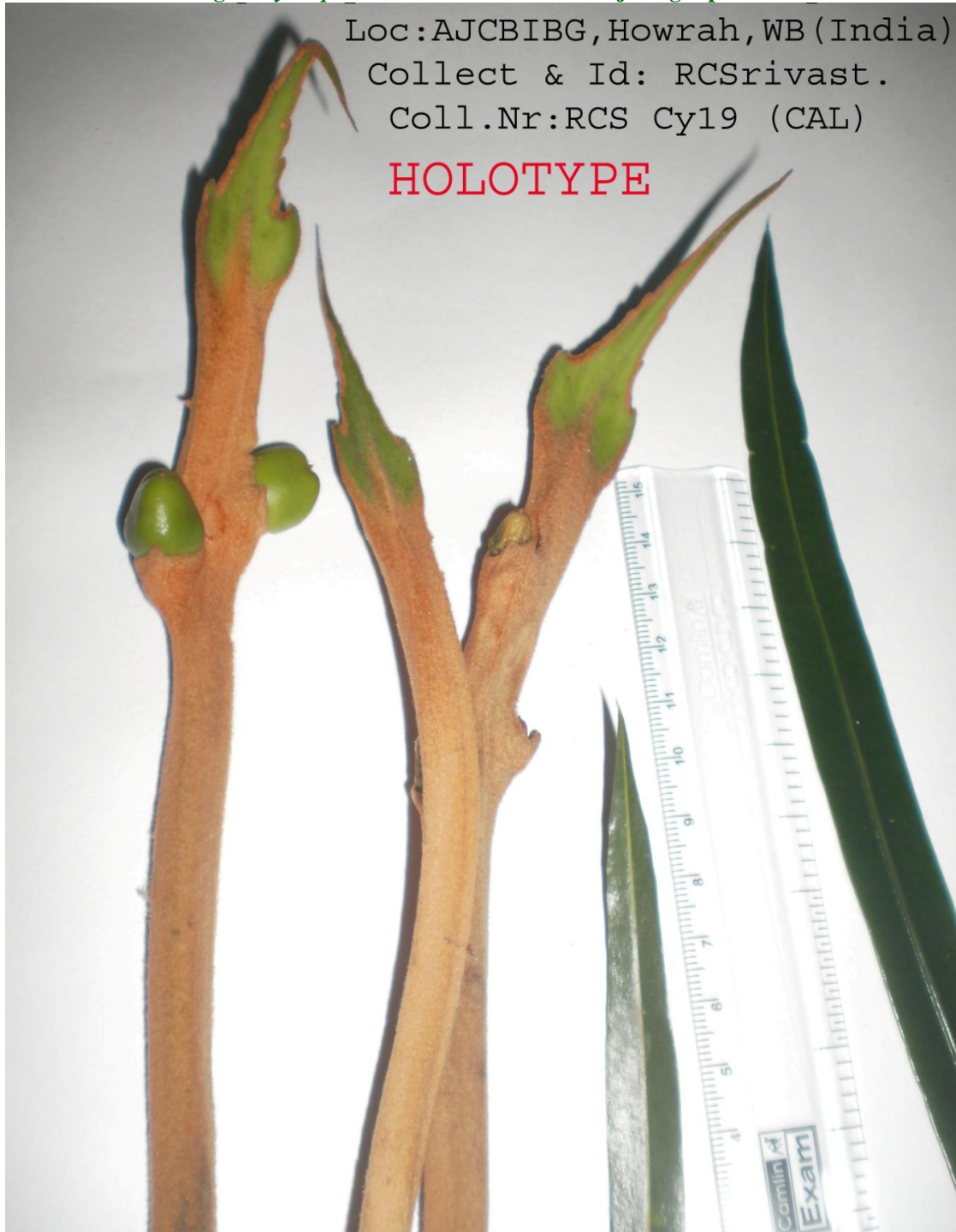
lateral, unequal horn like lateral teeth, abaxially green, glabrous; tip abruptly long- acuminate, 5- 8cm long, entire or serrate margined, more or less inwardly folded.

Abundant in littoral forest near the sea in sandy soil and also in periphery and low elevation evergreen beach forests.

Distribution: INDIA; Andaman Islands: North Middle and South Andaman Islands, Introduced in AJCBIBG, Howrah, West Bengal (INDIA) from Andaman Islands.

Etymology: The species is named in honour of Dr.Paramjit Singh Channa, Director, Botanical Survey of India.

Fig. 1: *Cycas pschannae* R.C. Srivast. & Lalji Singh sp. nov.



Uses

It can be grown as an ornamental tree.

Leaves are used during auspicious, religious and cultural ceremonies along with other local palm leaves like *Areca triandra* Roxb., *Caryota mitis* Lour., *Licula peltata* Roxb. and wild species of *Musa*.

The apical crown of young leaves and ovule are eaten as cooked vegetable by Ranchi settlers in all the places of Andaman where it naturally occurs.

Mature and hollow seeds are used as spoon and small box for storage of lime and tobacco (surti/ khaini).

Propagation

This *Cycas* sp. may be propagated by seeds or bulbils.

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