

# *Rauvolfia tetraphylla* Linn. from Azamgarh, Uttar Pradesh

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**Key-words**—*Rauvolfia tetraphylla*, New Record, Phytogeography, Medicine

*Rauvolfia tetraphylla* Linn. is reported here for the first time from Azamgarh district (Lat: 25°38' to 26° 27' N; Long. 82°40' to 83°52'E) in Uttar Pradesh (Duthie 1929, Raizada 1976).

*Rauvolfia* Linn, a shrubby lateciferous genus with flowers, having apically thickened style forming a styler head with usually distinct ovaries, jointed only by a common style or styler head, belongs to family Apocynaceae. The genus consists of 100 species, distributed throughout tropical and sub-tropical regions (Lawrence, 1951). There are seven species reported from India (Hooker 1882). Most of them are distributed in tropical part and only two occur in Himalaya (Babu 1977). *Rauvolfia tetraphylla* Linn., a native of West Indies, has been introduced to India more than 150 years ago (Sulochana 1959). Short description based on study of fresh specimens, its ecology, exact locality, phenology and illustrations of plant and its different floral parts (text figure 1) have been provided along with distribution and local uses of plant.

*Rauvolfia tetraphylla* Linn. Sp. Pl. 208. 1753; Raizada, in Suppl. Fl. Upp. Gang. Plain 147. 1976; Sulochana, in J. Ind. Bot. Soc. 38 (4): 586. 1959 – *R. subpubescens* Linn. Mant. 2:345. 1767. – *R. tomentosa* Jack. Enum. Pl. Carib. 14 – *R. hirsuta* Jack. Enum. Pl. Carib. 14. – *R. canescens* Linn. Sp. Pl. (ed.2) 303. 1762.

An erect, dichotomously branched, minutely lenticellate, small woody shrub approximately one metre high. Leaves 3-4 at the nodes, mostly 4 in each whorl of very unequal sized, 8-12x1.8-3.5 cm, elliptic, acute at apex, cuneate at the base, pubescent

above and glabrous beneath, margin entire and ciliate. Flowers small, white or cream coloured, shortly peduncled, arranged in few flowered, axillary, umbellate cymes. Calyx lobes short, rounded, ciliate, 2mm long. Corolla tube dilated at the top, 4mm long; lobes short rounded, unexpanded, ciliate. Stamens 5, included, 2mm long. Ovary superior, carpel 2; style filiform at the base, tip bifid; ovule 2, collateral in each carpel. Drupe 5-7mm in diam., dark purple to black at maturity, jointed to the top, ovoid, glabrous. Seed one, ovoid, rugose (Text fig. 1).

**Ecology**: Frequently found along road-sides and river banks under moist and slightly shady situations in association of *Sida acuta* Burm. f., *Ageratum conyzoides* Linn., *Polygonum glabrum* Linn., *Ammannia baccifera* Linn., *Alternanthera sessilis* (Linn.) DC., *Cassia occidentalis* Linn. and *Buddleja asiatica* Lour.

Fls. & Frts.: February-May, Local Name: Chanarika; Loc.: Azamgarh.

**Distribution** - A native of West Indies. Naturalized in various parts of India. Commonly found in hilly region of South India. (Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka) and other states such as Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh, West Bengal, Punjab and Delhi.

**Medicinal Use** - Leaves and twigs are boiled in castor oil and the mixture is used for the treatment of eczema and ringworm. Extract of root is taken internally to treat colic, cholera and other stomach disorder. It is also used in treatment of fever and uterine disease.

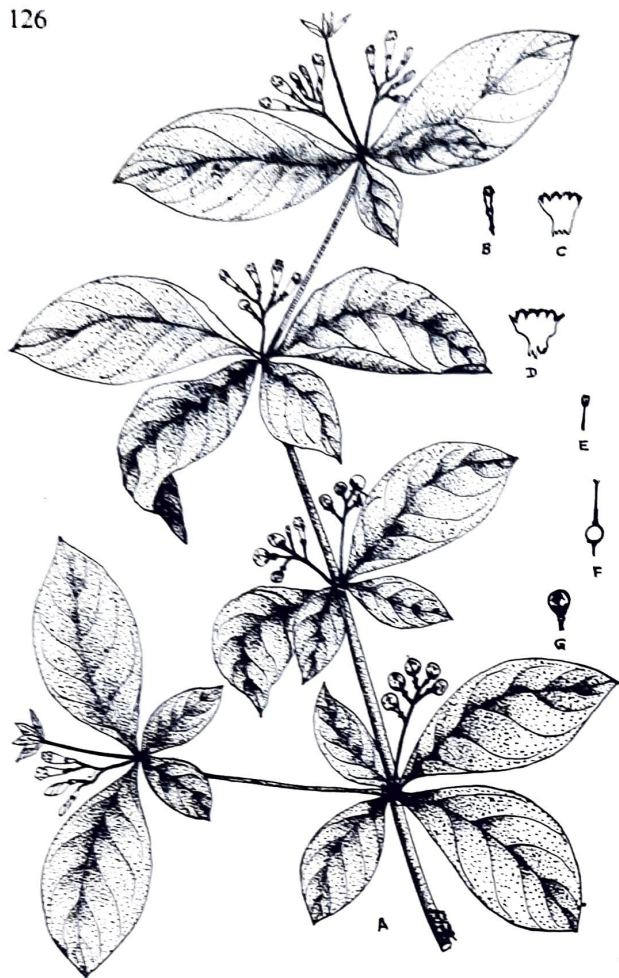


Fig. 1. *Rauvolfia tetraphylla* Linn.

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