

Short Note

***Zanthoxylum rhetsa* (Roxb.), a new record for Nepal**K. R. Rajbhandari^{1*} and G. Amatya²

Z*anthoxylum* L. is a genus belonging to the family Rutaceae. It is represented by 200 or more species distributed in the pantropical region and extending to the temperate latitudes in E. Asia and E. North America. It is characterized by evergreen or deciduous shrubs, trees or woody climbers, leaves alternate, odd-pinnately 3- to many foliolate or sometimes digitately 3-foliolate, inflorescence panicle, fruit follicular (Zhang and Hartley, 2008). Eight species of *Zanthoxylum* have been reported from Nepal (Press, 1979; Press *et al.*, 2000; Phuyal, 2011; Rajbhandari *et al.*, 2015). Recently, a specimen of *Zanthoxylum* collected from Surkhet district of west Nepal has been identified as *Zanthoxylum rhetsa*, (Fig. 1) This species has not been reported before from Nepal and is a new addition to the flora of Nepal.



Fig.1 Herbarium specimen of *Zanthoxylum rhetsa*

***Zanthoxylum rhetsa* (Roxb.) DC.** Prodr. 1 : 728 (1824).

Fagara rhetsa Roxb., Fl. Ind. 1 : 438 (1820).

Nepali name : *Rukhboke Timur, Gaai Simal Rukh.*

English name : Indian Pepper, Indian Prickly Ash.

Evergreen or deciduous trees, up to 25 m high; main trunk with conical prickles; branchlets sparsely prickly. Leaves alternate, compound, paripinnate or imparipinnate, 30-45 cm long; petiole and rachis usually prickly; leaflets 5-33, opposite and subopposite, ovate-oblong or lanceolate, base oblique, apex caudate-acuminate, acumen 1.5-3 cm long, margin entire to remotely crenate with glands in sinuses of crenatures, 7-19 x 3.0-6.5 cm, chartaceous to coriaceous, glabrous; petioles 2-7 mm long. Panicles terminal or pseudoterminal (from uppermost leaf axil), 10-25 cm long, peduncle and axes glabrous to puberulent, sometimes prickly.

Male flowers 1.5-2.5 mm long; pedicels 1-2 mm long; sepals 4, ovate-triangular, obtuse, subentire or fimbriate along margins; petals 4, valvate, elliptic-oblong, obtuse, white or creamy yellow; stamens 4; anthers oblong, yellow; disk pulvinate; pistillode solitary. Female flowers 1.5-2.5 mm long; pedicels, sepals, petals as in male flowers; staminodes absent; disk pulvinate; gynoecium 1-carpellate; stigma truncate; fruiting pedicels 1-4 mm long; follicles single, globose, apiculate, 5-7 mm across; seeds globose, 4-6 mm across, bluish-black.

Distribution : India, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Vietnam Philippines, Indonesia.

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Ecology : Occurs in the forest; 950-1100 m.

Fl. : April - June.

Fr. : Sept. -Nov.

Specimen examined : West Nepal : Surkhet district, Chaukunne Rural Municipality, 28°52'N, 81°20'E, 996 m, 2018. 9. 15, *G. Amatya* s. n. (KATH).

Use : Fruits are used as a spice. The wood is used for light construction of agriculture tool handle. Leaves are used for livestock fodder in acute shortage period.

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