

ASPLENIUM ROCKII C. CHR.—A NEW RECORD FOR PENINSULAR INDIA

N. P. BALAKRISHNAN* AND P. K. HAZRA

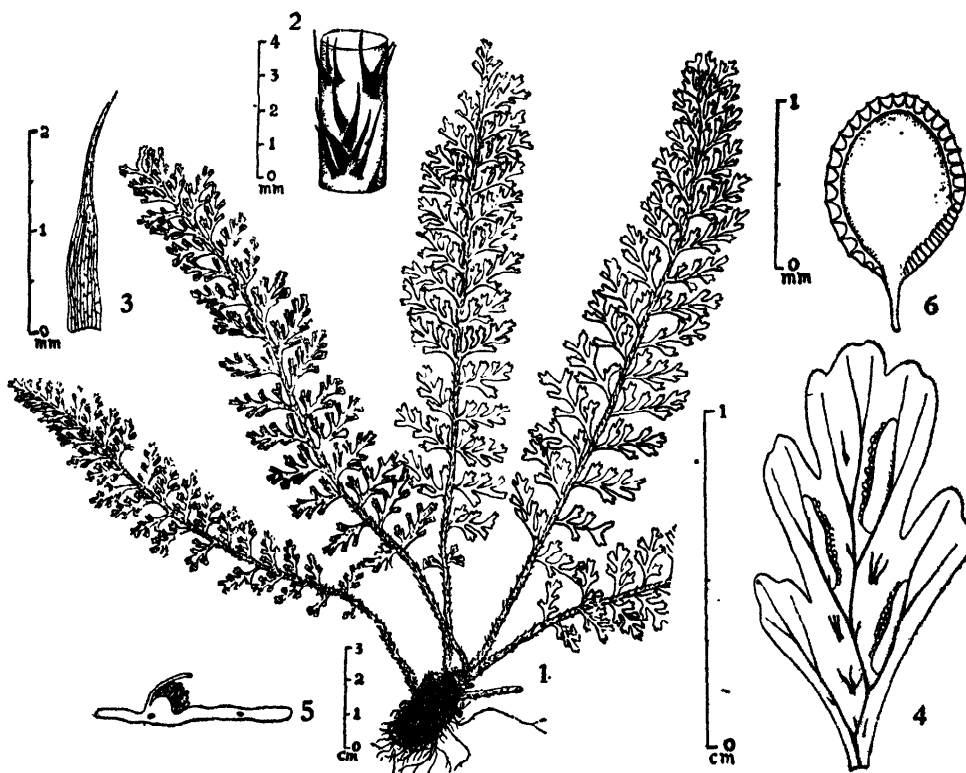
Botanical Survey of India, C. N. H., Sibpur, Howrah

During a botanical exploration in Araku Valley and surrounding hills in Visakhapatnam District of Andhra Pradesh, a large population of an *Asplenium* was noticed on rocky slopes in shaded places near streams at Sunkarimetta. A number of specimens were collected and examined. Having not matched with any species reported from the area, a specimen was sent to Kew Harbarium, where it was identified as *Asplenium rockii* C. Chr. The original description and photo of the type given in the protologue agree perfectly with our specimens. Christensen (1931) described this species from Northern Siam and later he reported it from Assam (1934). Dickason (1946) collected this species from 'Near N' Bapa Ford' at the Burma-Yunnan border. This species is thus a new record for Peninsular India. The distribution of this species is interesting. It extends from Northern

Siam through Burma-Yunnan border to Assam and now to the Eastern Ghats of Peninsular India.

Asplenium rockii is quite distinct from all Indian species of *Asplenium* in the presence of the peculiar clathrate brownish-black scales on stipe, rachis and costae. To quote the words of Christensen (1931): "This small species seems abundantly distinct from all species known from these regions. It is evidently related to the Javanese *A. stereophyllum* Kunze, resembling it in texture and cutting; but that species is much larger, with much longer stipe and without the peculiar dense scales of stipe, rachis and costae, which form the most prominent character of our new species."

Asplenium rockii C. Chr. in Contr. U.S. Nat. Herb. 26: 332. t. 27. 1931 et Index Filicum, Suppl. 3: 37. 1934; Dickason in Ohio J. Sci. 46: 125. 1946.



Figs. 1-6 : *Asplenium rockii* C. Chr.
1. Plant. 2. Stipe with scales. 3. Clathrate scale. 4. Pinnule with sori—ventral view.
5. Sorus—cross section with indusium. 6. Sporangium.

Rhizome short, creeping, lithophytic with numerous multicellular brownish-black, clathrate,

lanceolate-acuminate scales, densely arranged. Fronds many, suberect, 10-20 cm long, very rarely

*Present address : Botanical Survey of India, Eastern Circle, Shillong.

branched. Stipes 2-3 cm long, crinite by numerous narrow lanceolate, fimbriate, brownish-black scales, dense at base and scarce towards the apex; rachis slender, greenish, also with numerous scales. Lamina lanceolate, acuminate, 10-15 cm long, 2-4 cm wide, subcoriaceous, pale green, nearly bipinnate; pinnae 12-17 pairs, alternate, short-petiolate, truncate at upper base, cuneate at lower base, pinnately cut into 3 or 4 alternate pairs of pinnules, the apex rather obtuse, once or twice cleft, pinnules often 4 at the distal and 3 at the proximal side of the pinna, the basal distal one the largest, ± 1 cm long, cuneate-spathulate, deeply incised, with about 4 obtuse lobes, the other pinnules cuneate with 2-3 obtuse teeth at the apex; costae and larger veins with scattered scales beneath, similar to those of rachis but smaller and often fimbriate; margins revolute, veins faint, indistinct, once or twice branched. Sori 1 or 2 in each segment, nearly cover-

ing it, about 2-4 mm long, on one side of the veins, protected by a narrow, thin, oblong, entire indusium attached along the vein and opening normally towards the midrib and rolled back at maturity, about 1 mm wide. Spores pale brown. (Figs. 1-6)

ANDHRA PRADESH: Sunkarimetta, Visakhapatnam Dt., 1350 m, 19 September 1961, *Balakrishnan* 687 (CAL).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We are thankful to the Director, Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew in connection with the identification of the specimen and to the Director, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, for having kindly sent us a reprint of the original description. We also wish to express our thanks to Dr. S. K. Mukerjee, Keeper, Central National Herbarium for all guidance and encouragement.