

Selaginella chrysochloris Spring – a rare fern from Similipal Biosphere Reserve

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Abstract

Similipal Biosphere Reserve harbours *Selaginella chrysochloris*, a rare fern species. The distribution of the species is very rare and collected from a single location and isolated population. Repeated search failed to find out another population. The phyllotaxy of the taxon is peculiar and on critical examination was found to be *S. chrysochloris*, hitherto unknown to the fern diversity of Odisha. The identity as well as rarity of the taxon makes it note worthy. An *in situ* conservation is further suggested.

Key Words : Addition, flora, Odisha, *Selaginella*, rare .

Introduction

Selaginellaceae is a monogeneric family with about 750 species in tropical zone world wide. Alston (1945) enumerated 58 species from India which further enriched by several workers upto 65 species[1]. However, Dixit (1984) enlisted 59 species of *Selaginella* from the country[2]. Haines (1924) mentions 11 species of *Selaginella* in his treatise, mostly collected from the state of Bihar[3]. Saxena & Brahmam (1996) reports seven taxa under the genus, from the state of Odisha[4]. Panigrahi

(1998) reports nine species under the genus *Selaginella* from Odisha[5]. Saxena & Brahmam (1989) reported three taxa under the genus [6].

The present taxon has been reported from south east Asia. In India, the states like Jammu & Kashmir, Mizoram, Sikkim, West Bengal, Manipur and Assam record the distribution of the taxon.

Selaginella chrysochloris Spring, Mém. Acad. Sci. Belg. 24 (2): 251 (1850)

= *Lycopodioides chrysochloris* (Spring) Kuntze; Rev. Gen. Pl. 1: 826 (1891)

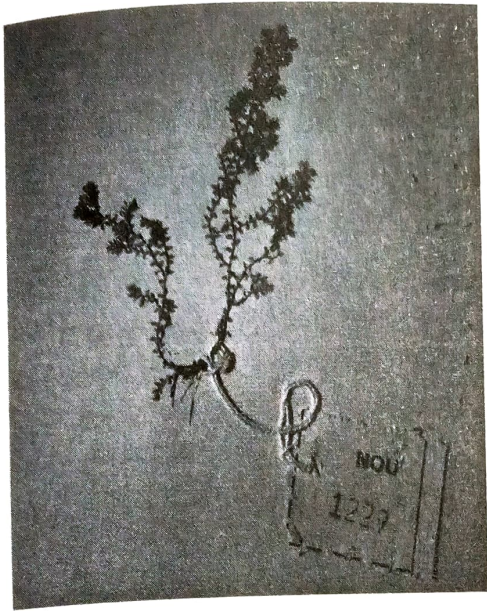


Fig: *Selaginella chrysorhizos*

Stem erect, densely tufted, very slender, up to 10 cm long, copiously pinnate, the erecto-patent, lower and middle ones considerably compound. Leaves dimorphic, lateral leaves spaced on the branchlets, oblique oblong, subobtusate, rather ascending, 1mm long, membranaceous, bright green, serrulate on the upper side but entire at base, broadly rounded on the upper side at base, imbricated over the stem, median leaves very small, ovate, aristate. Strobili short, 3-6 mm long, copious, sporophylls dimorphic, large sporophylls oblong-rhomboid, bright, green erecto-patent, ciliate, smaller sporophylls pale, green, ovate with large arista, ciliate.

Specimens Examined: NOU-1229, AKB, 04.06.2009, Namti.

Ecology : Growing on shady places of moist deciduous forest and rare in the locality.

Fertile: May –Sept.

Distribution: India (Assam, West Bengal, Kashmir), Nepal, Burma, Thailand, Vietnam, Laos.

Conservation

The taxon is located growing in a meager population from the locality and neither supported by further collection from any other locality from SBR nor from any part of Odisha. The rarity of the distribution commands urgent conservational measure. An *in situ* conservation is highly warranted for this taxon.

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