

***NICOTIANA PLUMBAGINIFOLIA* VIV. – AN ADDENDUM TO THE EDIPHYTES OF KARACHI**

D. KHAN

Department of Botany, University of Karachi, Karachi, Pakistan.

Nicotiana plumbaginifolia Viv. (solanaceous herb c 1m in height), generally called Tex-Mex Tobacco or smaller tobacco or Neeshnam Other, is said to be a weed native to Mexico and the West Indies. It is widely reported from Rawalpindi District (Marir village- R.R. Stewart 9672 (RAW), Gordon College - M.A. Siddiqui 6361 (RAW), Leh – E. Nasir & M.A. Siddiqui 105 (RAW), Leh Nala – M.A. Siddiqui 342 (RAW); Peshawar District (Peshawar - Kazmi 824 (PES, RAW); D.I. Khan District (D.I. Khan - Rashid Ali 2190 (RAW) and Lahore district (Lahore – R.R. Stewart 7080 (RAW) of Pakistan (Nasir, 1985).



Fig. 1. *Nicotiana plumbaginifolia* growing as ediphyte due to faulty drainage line in Abbasi Shaheed hospital, Karachi (A); Inflorescence (B) and Flower with pinkish underside of petals (C).

It was observed colonizing derelict areas, flowerbeds and lawns in the campus of Govt. National College Karachi, after winter rains several times and among the roadside plants near Islamia College, and Abbasi Shaheed Hospital in April 2008. Plant size data and its vital leaf characteristics, when growing as winter weed in Karachi; have been published by Khan (2008). *N. plumbaginifolia* may sometimes grow as an ediphyte (Fig.1A). Hussain *et al.* (2011) have enlisted 25 tree and herbaceous ediphytes from Karachi. *Nicotiana plumbaginifolia* Viv. is an addition to the list of ediphytic plants of Karachi.

It is an erect pubescent herb up to 1m tall. It bears both radical and cauline leaves of variable sizes. Cauline leaves are pubescent, elliptic-oblong or oblanceolate, entire or margin wavy, cuneate to decurrent. Radical leaves thick and succulent. Inflorescence is a panicle (Fig. 1B). Pedicel c 3 mm, pubescent. Calyx around 10 mm pubescent nervose, lobes linear, lanceolate. Corolla tube 3-4 cm long and limb 1 to 1.5 cm broad, lobes five glaucous. Mature corolla white above but pink on the underside (Fig. 1C). Anthers small, ovary bicarpellary, syncarpous, superior with axile placentation; style c 2 cm long; stigma roughly bifid, green. Capsule ovoid included in the persistent calyx. Seeds small (less than 1mm) sub-globose to angular, minutely rugose-reticulate, brown.

The plant is known to be economically important. According to Powers (1874) its leaves are sun-dried, finely cut and smoked. It has widely been studied and employed in physiological, biochemical and genetic and molecular research.

References

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