

**MERRILLIOPANAX CORDIFOLIA,
A NEW SPECIES OF ARALIACEAE FROM INDIA**

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An Araliaceous plant from Subansiri District was found on a critical study to be *Merrillioanax* Li, a genus founded on *Dendropanax listeri* King (in Journ. Asia. Soc. Bengal 67, 2: 294, 1898) from Assam. In a revision of the *Araliaceae* of China, Li (Sargentia 2: 62—65, 1942) showed that *Dendropanax listeri* King, with its paniculate inflorescence, 2-celled ovary, and 2 stylar arms did not fit within the generic characters of *Dendropanax* Decaisne & Planch. and erected the new genus *Merrillioanax*. Apart from the type species *M. listeri* (King) Li, he described a new species, *M. chinensis*, from Yunnan, China. The Subansiri plant was found to be distinct from both the earlier described species and is now described as a new species.

Merrillioanax cordifolia A. R. K. Sastry, *spec. nov.* — **Fig. 1.**

Differt a *M. listeri* (King) Li et *M. chinensi* Li foliis simplicibus vel alte 3-lobatis, ad basin cordatis, nervis basalibus 5—7 eminentibus, reticulatione nervorum in utraque pagina distincta, tomento stellato-piloso ad basin cordatum et secus nervos principales in pagina inferiore exiguo, nervis tertiariis in denticulationes aculeatas marginales desinentibus; inflorescentia dense griseo-stellato-tomentosa, quam folia multo breviori; floribus breviter pedicellatis, calycis dentibus dense stellato-tomentosis, minutim denticulatis; petalis extus minutim stellato-pilosis, intus glabris, apicibus subteretibus, glanduliferis, quam stamina longioribus.

Holotypus A. R. K. Sastry 44893A lectus inter Begi — Amjee in distr. Subansiri, ad alt. ca 1540 m, die 12 maii 1966 et positus in CAL; isotypus A. R. K. Sastry 44893B positus in Herbario Kanjilal ad Shillong (ASSAM).

Merrillioanax cordifolia A. R. K. Sastry.

Shrub \pm 4 m tall, branching from the base, branches slender, terete, young parts dark brown, densely grey stellate-tomentose, tomentum deciduous, older parts greyish, glabrous, sparsely lenticellate, longitudinally furrowed. *Leaves* stipulate, petiolate; petioles 3.5—16.0 cm long, \pm 2.0 mm thick, striate, densely stellate-hairy becoming glabrescent, dilate at base; lamina ovate or ovate-oblong, entire to palmately deeply 3-lobed, 8.5—15.5 by 4.0—8.2 cm, subcoriaceous when fresh, subchartaceous on drying, glabrescent except along the main nerves at the base on the dorsal side, dark green ventrally, paler dorsally; base cordate, 5—7-nerved; apex abruptly caudate-acuminate; acumen up to 2.5 cm long; margins irregularly aculeate-denticulate; midrib moderately thick, distinctly raised dorsally with 3—5 lateral nerves on either side; venation finely reticulate, distinct on both the surfaces; marginal tertiary nerves ending into each of the aculeate-denticulations; lobes in palmate lamina oblong or lanceolate, 7.0—12.5 by 2.0—3.5 cm; sinuses acute or obtuse. *Inflorescence* terminal, paniculate, umbellate,

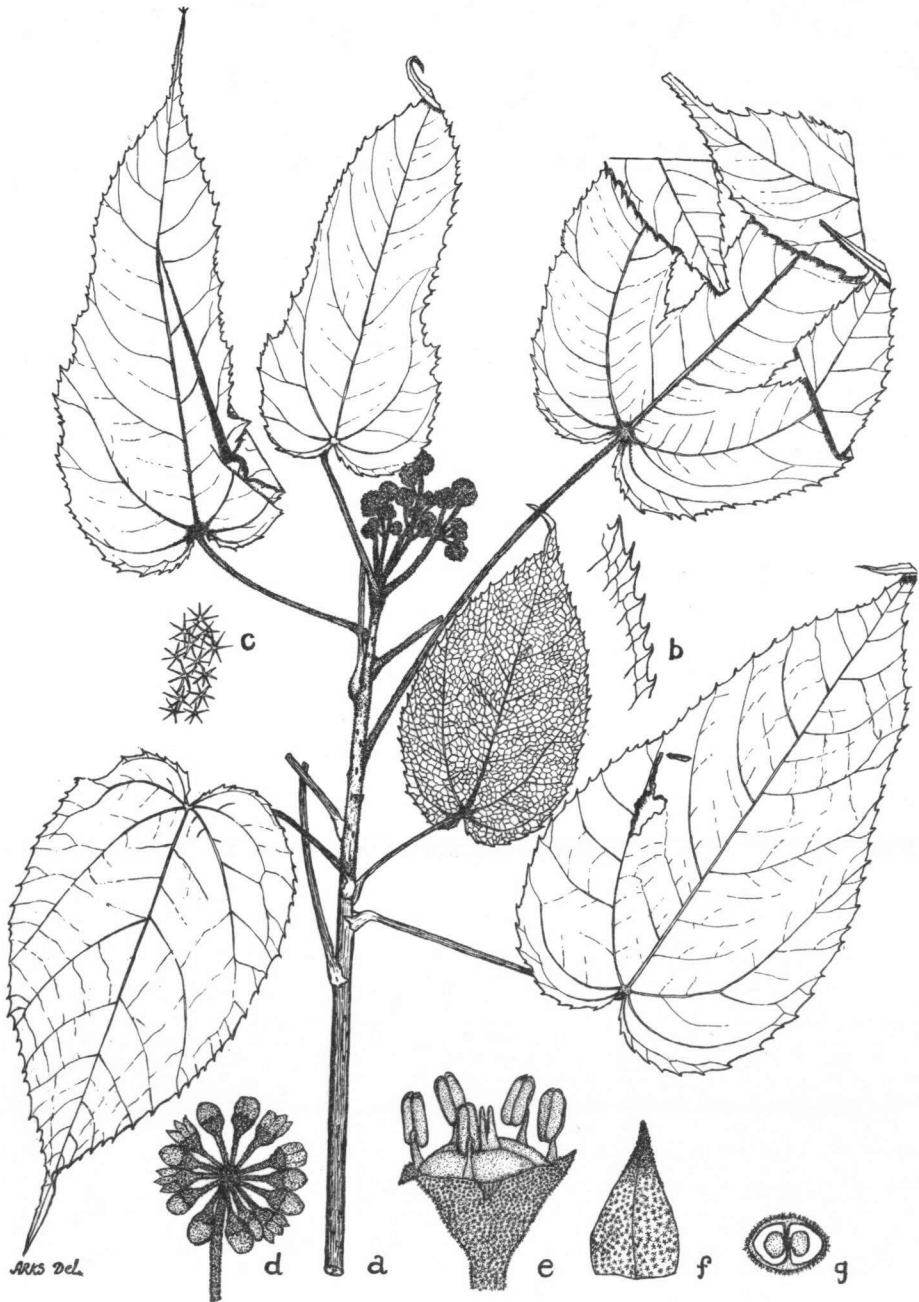


Fig. 1. *Merrillipanax cordifolia* A. R. K. Sastry. a. Habit, $\times \frac{1}{2}$; b. portion of leaf margin, $\times 1\frac{1}{4}$; c. stellate tomentum, highly enlarged; d. umbel, $\times 2$; e. flower, petals removed, $\times 10$; f. petal, $\times 10$; g. ovary in cross section, $\times 10$. (A. R. K. Sastry 44893A).

± 4 cm long, much shorter than the leaves, densely grey stellate-tomentose; umbels 7—14-flowered. *Flower buds* ± 3.0 by 2.5 mm, subglobose; pedicels 1—3 mm long; *calyx* ± 1 mm long, more densely stellate-tomentose than petals, cupshaped, 5-toothed; calyx-teeth ± 0.25 mm, triangular, microscopically denticulate; *petals* 5, valvate, ± 2 by 1 mm, triangular, with a median stripe, stellate-tomentose without, glabrous within; apex subterete-acuminate, glandular; *stamens* 5, ± 1.5 mm long, slightly shorter than the petals, anthers dorsifixed; *ovary* inferior, 2-celled, ± 1 mm in diam.; styles 2, ± 0.5 mm long, free almost to the base, glabrous. *Fruit* not seen.

INDIA. North East Frontier Agency: Subansiri District: Begi — Amjee, alt. ± 1540 m, 12th May 1966, fl., A. R. K. Sastry 44893A, holotype (CAL); A. R. K. Sastry 44893B, isotype (ASSAM).

KEY TO THE SPECIES OF MERRILLIOPANAX

1. Leaf base cuneate to broadly acute.
 2. Leaves elliptic-lanceolate, base acute to broadly acute, subentire or denticulate, glabrous on both surfaces; pedicels 6.0—13.0 mm long 1. *M. listeri*
 2. Leaves ovate, base broadly acute, mostly shallowly 2—3-lobed, margins entire with scattered stellate-tomentose hairs beneath, pedicels 3.0—4.0 mm long 2. *M. chinensis*
1. Leaf base cordate 3. *M. cordifolia*

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