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Ph: +91 9385339863 | www.threatenedtaxa.org

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Cover: *Geodorum laxiflorum* Griff.—inflorescence (Orchidaceae) © Ashish Ravindra Bhowar.



NOTE

Geodorum laxiflorum Griff. (Orchidaceae), a new distribution record for Maharashtra state of India

Ashish Ravindra Bhoyar¹ , Swapnil Nandgawe² , Syed Abrar Ahmed³  & Saduram Madavi⁴ 

^{1,2,3} Post Graduate Department of Botany, Government Science College, Gadchiroli, Maharashtra 442605, India.

³Department of Botany, Government College of Arts and Science, Aurangabad, Maharashtra 431004, India.

⁴Biodiversity Management Committee, Tukum, Dhanora Dist. Gadchiroli, Maharashtra 442606, India.

¹imashu90@gmail.com, ²snandgawe1@gmail.com, ³sdabrar645@gmail.com (corresponding author), ⁴madavisaduram@gmail.com

Orchidaceae is one of the most diverse and largest families of Angiosperms comprising more than 28,000 recognised plants in around 763 genera (Willis 2017; Jain et al. 2021). In India, around 1,331 species coming under 186 genera represent around 5.98% of the world's orchid flora and 6.83% of the flowering plants in India (De 2020). Recent botanical explorations in Maharashtra, revealed the presence of 32 genera with 106 taxa. The most dominant genus is *Habenaria* with 23 species, followed by *Dendrobium* with 11, *Eulophia* and *Oberonia* with seven, and *Peristylus* with six species (Jalal & Jayanthi 2018). The genus *Geodorum* Jackson is an Indo-Malesian group of about 12 species (Bhatt et al. 2015; Govaerts et al. 2017). In India only six species are found, namely, *Geodorum appendiculatum* Griff., *G. densiflorum* (Lam.) Schlr., *G. laxiflorum* Griff., *G. pallidum* D.Don, *G. recurvum* (Roxb.) Alston, and *G. attenuatum* Griff. (Misra 2007; Kumar et al. 2008; Bhatt et al. 2015; Govaerts et al. 2015). During our exploration we came across a plant which was blooming in the deep forest of Dhanora Tehsil (20.233N, 80.346E) (Figure 1) in Gadchiroli district of Maharashtra, India. The flowering plant looked like pearls spread on the green belt of

earth; our curiosity led us to investigate it further.

Markagaon forest range (20.233N, 80.346E) (Figure 1) in the southern part of Dhanora tehsil is well known for its dense dry deciduous forest. Dhanora tehsil is covered with hills and forests and is considered a tribal area. Gadchiroli District mainly receives rain from the south-west monsoon. The average rainfall is 1,562 mm. The climatic conditions are extreme with temperatures reaching 47.3 °C in summer and 9.4 °C in winter.

During our thorough exploration in the Gadchiroli district, we observed the taxa with some interesting characters and is described technically as follows:

Geodorum laxiflorum Griff.

Calcutta J. Nat. Hist. 5: 356 (1845); Hook.f., Fl. Brit. India 6: 18 (1890); G.Seidenfaden, Opera Botanica 72: 51 (1983); S.Misra, Orch. Orissa: 560 (2004); Bhatt et al., Richadiana: 333(2015).

Plant terrestrial, 30–50 cm tall (including leaves); corm 4.5–5 cm, ovoid, slightly compressed, greenish-brown, with scars of fallen leaves; roots few, vermiform, ca. 0.2 cm thick; pseudo stem ca. 10 × 1 cm, enclosed by four foliar imbricating sheaths; leaves 2–4, caulin,

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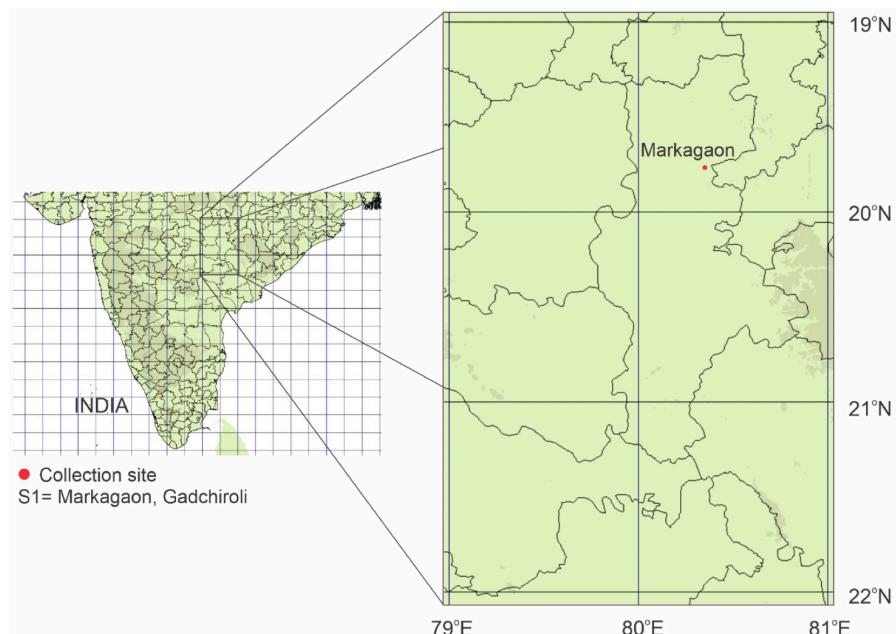


Figure 1. Distribution map showing the occurrence (red dot) of *Geodorum laxiflorum*.



Image 1. *Geodorum laxiflorum* Griff.: A—habitat | B&C—inflorescence | D—closeup of flower | E—fruiting stage. © Ashish Ravindra Bhoyar

alternate, elliptic lanceolate, acute, undulate, subequal, 13–36 × 8–12 cm, many veined, midvein prominent beneath; inflorescence lateral from the base of newly developed leafy shoot and shorter than it, 20–30 cm; peduncle erect, 20–27 × 0.2 cm, green, decurved at the top, with four membranous tubular sheaths; raceme laxly flowered with 6–12 medium sized flowers; rachis decurved, ca. 2.5–4 cm long with two sterile bracts; bracts green, oblong lanceolate, ca. 1.1 × 0.3 cm, membranous with acute apex, 3 veined; pedicel with ovary 1.3 cm long, ribbed; flowers white off-white, sepals and petals spreading, 1.5–2.5 cm across; sepals subequal, 5-veined, oblong lanceolate; dorsal sepal ca. 2.1 × 0.6–0.7 cm; lateral sepals ca. 2.2 × 0.8 cm; petals broader, obovate oblong, ca. 2.3 × 1.2 cm, apex acute obtuse, 7-veined; lip ca. 2.1 × 1.5–1.7 cm, broadly obovate, emarginated, sessile on the base of column, entire, ventricose at the base; sides of the hypochile erect; epichile undulate, edge deflexed, two irregular rows of thick warts starting from the base of the epichile and ending before the apex, hypochile golden brown within, epichile yellow at base and pink at apex; column stout, short, oblong, slightly dilated, ca. 0.5–0.6 × 0.3 cm long; stigma squarish, ca. 0.2 cm long, anther broadly ovate orbicular in outline, ca. 0.3–0.4 cm, off-white with brown tinge, the locules pouch like; pollinia yellow, obliquely oblong ovoid, porate behind, ca. 0.2 × 0.15 cm, stipe hyaline, subquadrate (Image 1).

Flowering: June–July; Fruiting: August–October.

Ecology: Extremely rare in dry deciduous forests, at an elevation range of about 263 m.

Distribution: Endemic to India Assam, Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Jharkhand, Odisha, Telangana, and Maharashtra (this report).

Specimen examined: GSC/Gad/Bot.Sp.No. 263, 27.vii.2021, Markagaon forest range, Gadchiroli district, Maharashtra, India, coll. Syed Abrar Ahmed. The

specimen is preserved in the Department of Botany, Government Science College, Gadchiroli.

Recently, *Geodorum laxiflorum* was reported from southern peninsular India from Nallamalai hills, part of the Eastern Ghats of Andhra Pradesh (Rao & Prasad 2011) and from the Western Ghats, Waghai taluka of Dangs district, Gujarat state (Bhatt et al. 2015).

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The Managing Editor, JoTT,
c/o Wildlife Information Liaison Development Society,
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Saravanampatti, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu 641035, India
ravi@threatenedtaxa.org

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