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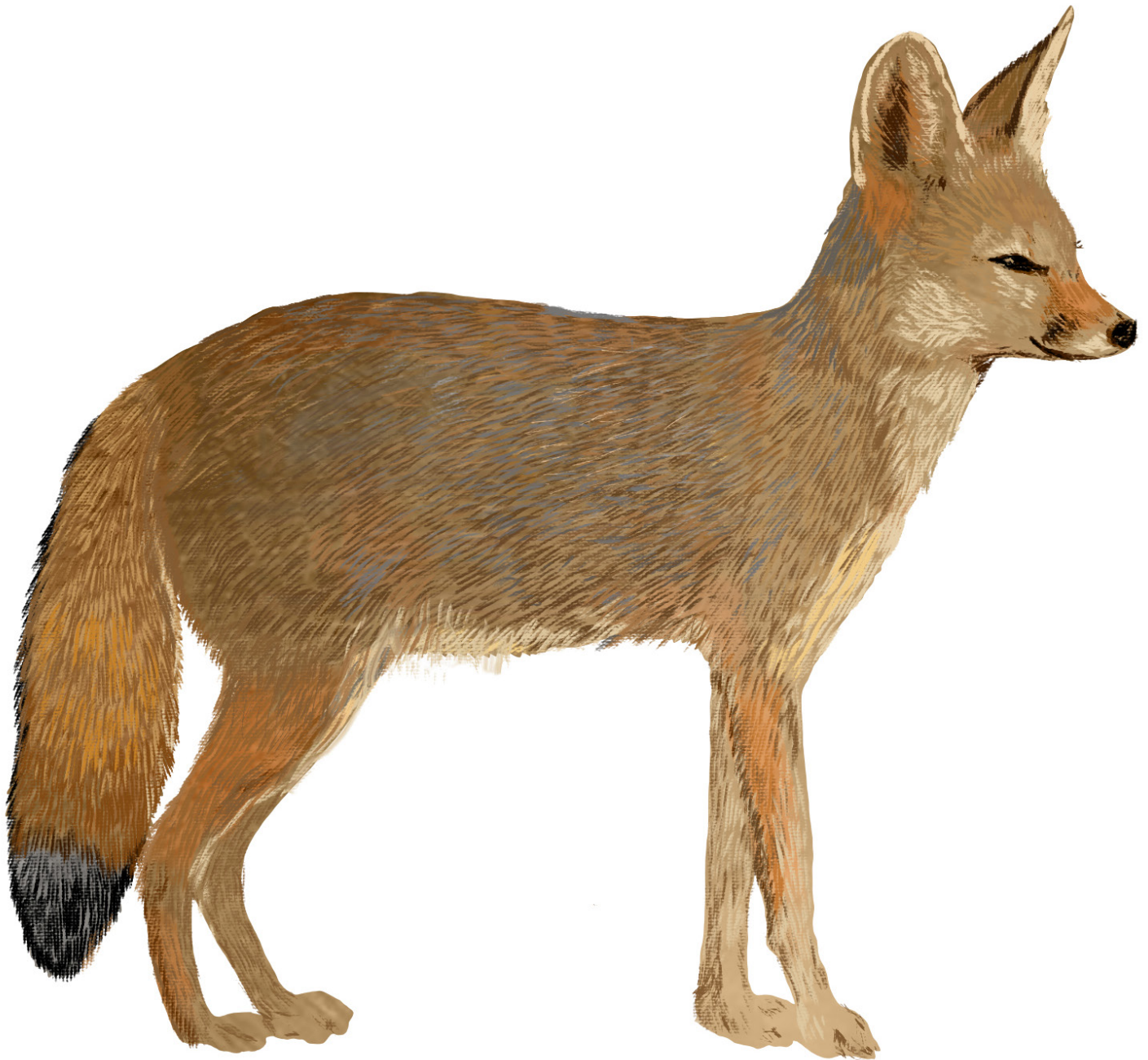
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43/2 Varadarajulu Nagar, 5th Street West, Ganapathy, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu 641006, India
Registered Office: 3A2 Varadarajulu Nagar, FCI Road, Ganapathy, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu 641006, India
Ph: +91 9385339863 | www.threatenedtaxa.org
Email: sanjay@threatenedtaxa.org

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Cover: Bengal Fox *Vulpes bengalensis*—digital illustration. © Alagu Raj.



Flowers of labour – Commelinaceae of India: Book review

Rajeev Kumar Singh

Botanical Survey of India, Arid Zone Regional Centre, AIIMS Road, Jodhpur, Rajasthan 342014, India.
rksbsiadsingh@gmail.com

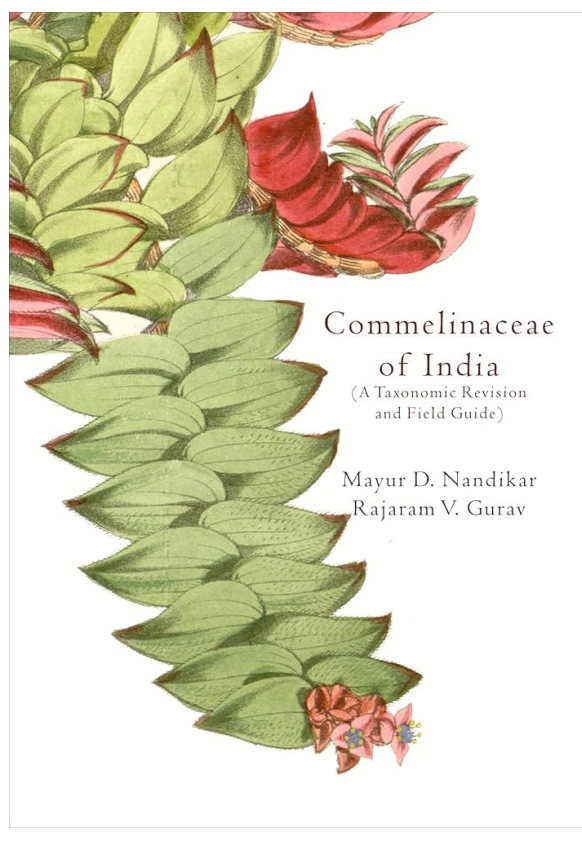
The family Commelinaceae Mirb. comprises of 41 genera and 731 species (Faden 2012; Christenhusz & Byng 2016), distributed mainly in the tropics and subtropics, whereas POWO (2024) accepts 36 genera and 774 species. The members of this family are commonly known as “Dayflower”. Karthikeyan et al. (1989) recorded 14 genera and 85 taxa from India. Later, Nandikar & Gurav (2020) listed 14 genera and 96 taxa from India, while these authors in the book ‘Commelinaceae of India (A Taxonomic Revision & Field Guide)’ have reported 15 genera and 130 taxa, of which 30 taxa are endemic. The aim of the book is to provide revision of the Indian Commelinaceae, in a comprehensive way in a single book which was not attempted earlier. This book is the outcome of the hard work, careful observations, and untiring efforts of the first author, which lasted about 14 years (2010–2023). He was awarded Ph.D. in the year 2013 on Indian Commelinaceae. It is a well written, nicely illustrated, well organized, and produced book.

The book contains nine chapters or sections, viz., historical outline of Commelinaceae, methodology, novelties, common & local names, systematic treatment, cultivated & ornamental species, references, index of plant names, and photographs. The section on systematic treatment occupies a major portion of the book. This part begins with morphological descriptions of Commelinaceae members’ habit, stem, leaf, inflorescence, stamens, pollen grains, style, capsule, and seed, followed by dichotomous key to the tribes & genera, and genera-wise detailed taxonomic description of all taxa. Every genus provides the number of taxa in the world & in India, complete taxonomic citation with synonyms, type species, etymology, distribution & habitat, and dichotomous key to species & intraspecific taxa. Each species and intraspecific taxa is given a current accepted name with relevant taxonomic references, type details, synonym/s with type details, etymology, detailed morphological descriptions, distribution &

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habitat, chromosome count, IUCN threat assessment, notes, and specimens examined. Coloured photos and line drawing illustrations with scales are provided for many taxa.

Nonetheless, in such a big work, a few discrepancies that went unnoticed by authors are mentioned here. The number of accepted genera, on the page with heading 'About the book' and on page 3 is 15, but in dichotomous key to genera and in systematic treatment the number is only 12. Similarly, on page 3 the total number of accepted taxa given is 131, but in systematic treatment the number is 126. Authors mention the lectotype for the name *Cyanotis fasciculata* (B. Heyne ex Roth) Schult. & Schult.f. as designated by Arigela et al. (2023), but it was designated by Singh (2022). Similarly, authors have incorrectly mentioned the lectotype designation for the names *Cyanotis decumbens* Wight,

C. dichrotricha Stocks ex Wight, and *C. thwaitesii* Hassk. Many citations mentioned in the systematic treatment are not included in the references section, like Arigela et al. (2023), Faden (1980), Jameera et al. (2016), Merrill & Dandy (1937), Singh (2022), and Singh & Muguran (2019).

Overall, the book is a praiseworthy, long-awaited contribution to the knowledge of the Indian Commelinaceae and is a must for all botanical institutions, colleges, universities, and for those interested in Dayflowers. The book should also be very useful to foreign countries, especially neighbouring countries and other Asian countries. I congratulate the authors for the great work they have accomplished and succeeded, and they splendidly deserve substantial compliments by the entire botanical fraternity of the country.



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