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Flowering Plants of Pudukkottai District, Tamil Nadu

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**The Rapinat Herbarium
St. Joseph's College (Autonomous)
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FORWORD

Pudukkottai district was home to prehistoric human settlements and has witnessed empires from the Cholas and Pandyas to the Nayaks, culminating in its period as Thondaiman princely state under the British. The long history of Pudukkottai district is reflected in its array of major archaeological sites, including prehistoric sites, ancient burial grounds, temples, cave shrines, Jain monuments and remarkable remains of classical Tamil art and inscriptions. Pudukkottai was organised as a separate district of Tamil Nadu, on 14th January 1974.

Pudukkottai district is one of the drought prone areas of Tamil Nadu with the aridity index averaging 59% and the mean annual moisture index of 40%. This district has a range of geographical features, including a coastal plain along Bay of Bengal, inland areas, rocky hills and a network of water bodies, which shapes the vegetation. The vegetation of this district primarily consists of scrub forest, tropical dry evergreen forests, supplemented by wetlands, sacred groves and a sprinkling of mangrove ecosystem. This district is notable for its Tropical Dry Evergreen Forests (TDEF) with numerous sacred groves and reserve forests. TDEF are ecologically unique vegetation, displaying evergreen canopy even in the most arid regions. These TDEF's are often preserved as 'sacred groves'. The mass monoculture of *Eucalyptus* and *Casuarina* in this district has left an indelible effect on its native floral diversity and transforming the ecological character of the land.

District floras are fundamental building blocks for understanding and conserving the Nation's plant diversity. They provide information in a detailed, localised data and the plant adaptations to a specific habitat requirement, which are crucial for a range of scientific and effective targeted conservation strategies. These floras, when regularly updated, provide historical and current data that is useful for studying ecological shifts, climate change, invasive species and pinpoint zones affected by anthropogenic pressures. Finally, district floras remain indispensable for informed local conservation planning efforts and the data tangibly benefits locally and nationally by empowering the local stakeholders in formulating People's Biodiversity Register (PBR), Access Benefit Sharing (ABS) and linking with national priorities like CBD, Nagoya Protocol and SDG goals.

The authors are to be congratulated for this timely book on the flora of Pudukkottai district, which addresses the longstanding need for a comprehensive record of the flora of this district. Almost a decade of field surveys, plant collections, research work, the authors have brought about this remarkable book which would serve the students, researchers, foresters, conservationists, and local governments immeasurably.

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Authors

PREFACE

Plants are essential for sustaining life on Earth, and their service to human being is remarkable in various dimensions. However, the modern education system, underestimate the importance of basic science such as plant taxonomy and gives emphasizes on modern disciplines that are also preferred by the young minds. In this situation, the authors have made a comprehensive book on the flora of Pudukkottai district, providing tools to identify the plants of this biodiversity rich region.

The Pudukkottai district indeed has a rich cultural heritage, like forts, palaces, temples, cave paintings, historical monuments, with rich floristic diversity. After the analysis of the flora, a total of 881 taxa of angiosperms, including 56 infraspecific taxa distributed over 523 genera, belonging to 123 families under 40 orders of Angiosperm Phylogeny Group IV classification. The nomenclature of each taxon has updated carefully. The correct and accepted binomial of the species, along with synonyms and references to publications up to 2025, have been incorporated. The present flora provided 22 plates of photographs and line drawings to make their easy identification.

We hope that the results of this book will directly benefit the students and research scholars in the field of Botany and are intended for the taxonomists, ecologists, conservationists, and forest officials to maintain and improve the existing state of vegetation for future generations. It also provides a baseline to simplify the establishment plan and proper approach for the management and conservation of plants in Pudukkottai district.

Authors

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Chithannavasal



Kalvattam



Samanar Padukkai

Flowering Plants of Pudukkottai District, Tamil Nadu

P. Raja

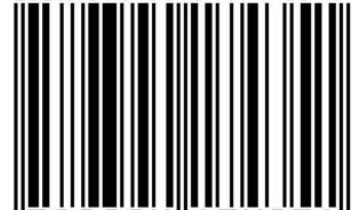
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