

A REVISION OF THE GENUS *EXACUM* L. (GENTIANACEAE) IN SRI LANKA

L. H. Cramer

(c/o National Herbarium, Peradeniya)

Though represented by only 5 species in Sri Lanka, *Exacum* L. is one of the most difficult genera of the Gentianaceae in the country as it is in the palaeotropics. A valid genus since its creation by Linnaeus (1753) it shows difficulties in specific delimitation even among its few representatives in Sri Lanka.

Reasons for these difficulties are briefly given.

Against a diagnostic description of *Exacum* the paper presents a critical review of our representative species. Their morphological characters are investigated into greater detail than have hitherto been done by Trimen (1895). Floral characters are considered more significant than vegetative ones; of the former those of corolla, calyx and stamens are stressed.

The review indicates that there is among our species one big complex of taxa composed of two related species, viz. *E. walkeri* Arn. and *E. trinervium* (L.) Druce, the latter consisting of 4 subspecies. With the reduction of *E. macranthum* Arn. to subspecific rank only 5 species are now recognized in the genus in Sri Lanka. On morphological grounds *E. pedunculatum* L. is considered a misidentification of *E. petiolare* Griseb.

A key to the species is provided and the distributional range of each indicated under essential documentation to nomenclature.

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References :

Linnaeus, C. (1753). *Species Plantarum*, 112. Facs. Ed. (London).