Occurrence of tricarpy in *Ceropegia attenuata* Hook. (Asclepiadaceae)

The floral characters are the basis of plant classification and very specific within different taxa of plants. The family Asclepiadaceae is characterized by bicarpellary, syncarpus, superior ovary and fruit a pair of follicles. Santapau and Irani on the basis of critical study further explained that the pistil is bicarpellary, typically composed of 2 free superior ovaries, 2 styles which cohere above to form a flattened five-angled stigma head; fruit is a pair of follicles which are divaricate. These are the common characters, which are found in all the genera of the family. *Ceropegia* L. is an important taxon of this family. In India, the genus is represented by 45 species, of which 28 are endemic to the country. Almost 50% species of *Ceropegia* L. are found in the Western Ghats. Many species are facing different threats and 16 species are recorded under different categories in the Red Data Book.

For conservation and regeneration studies, 12 species, viz. *C. attenuata* Hook., *C. bulbosa* Roxb., *C. bulbosa* var. *lushii* (Grah.) Hook., *C. hirsuta* Wight & Arn., *C. lawii* Hook., *C. mahabalei* Hemadri & Ansari, *C. media* (Huber) Ansari, *C. oculata* Hook., *C. oculata* var. *subhirsuta* Huber, *C. panchganiensis* Blatt. & McC., *C. rollae*, Hemadri and *C. vincaefolia* Hook. are planted in earthen pots at our garden. These species are collected from different localities in Western Ghats. The specimen of *Ceropegia attenuata* Hook. (Vulnerable) was collected from Radhanagari, District Kolhapur.

Under 'cultivation' all the above species showed flower development but fruit set had been observed only in some species, viz. *C. attenuata*, *C. bulbosa*, *C. bulbosa* var. *lushii*, *C. hirsuta*, *C. mahabalei* and *C. rollae*. After fruit setting upper flowers aborted in all the above species. In *C. mahabalei* and *C. rollae* only one follicle develops first to full size and then the other, while in the remaining species both the follicles from a pair develop simultaneously.

Surprisingly, in the *C. attenuata* Hook. there were three follicles developed instead of two (Figure 1). All the follicles developed simultaneously and were of almost equal length (ca 5.0–5.5 cm), straight, tapering to a fine point. Santapau and Irani reported that sometimes single follicle develops in this species, but not three. This communication is a report on the formation of three follicles in the genus *Ceropegia* L. (Asclepiadaceae).

**Figure 1.** *Ceropegia attenuata* Hook. *a*. Flower. *b*. Three follicles developed from a bicarpellary ovary.

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