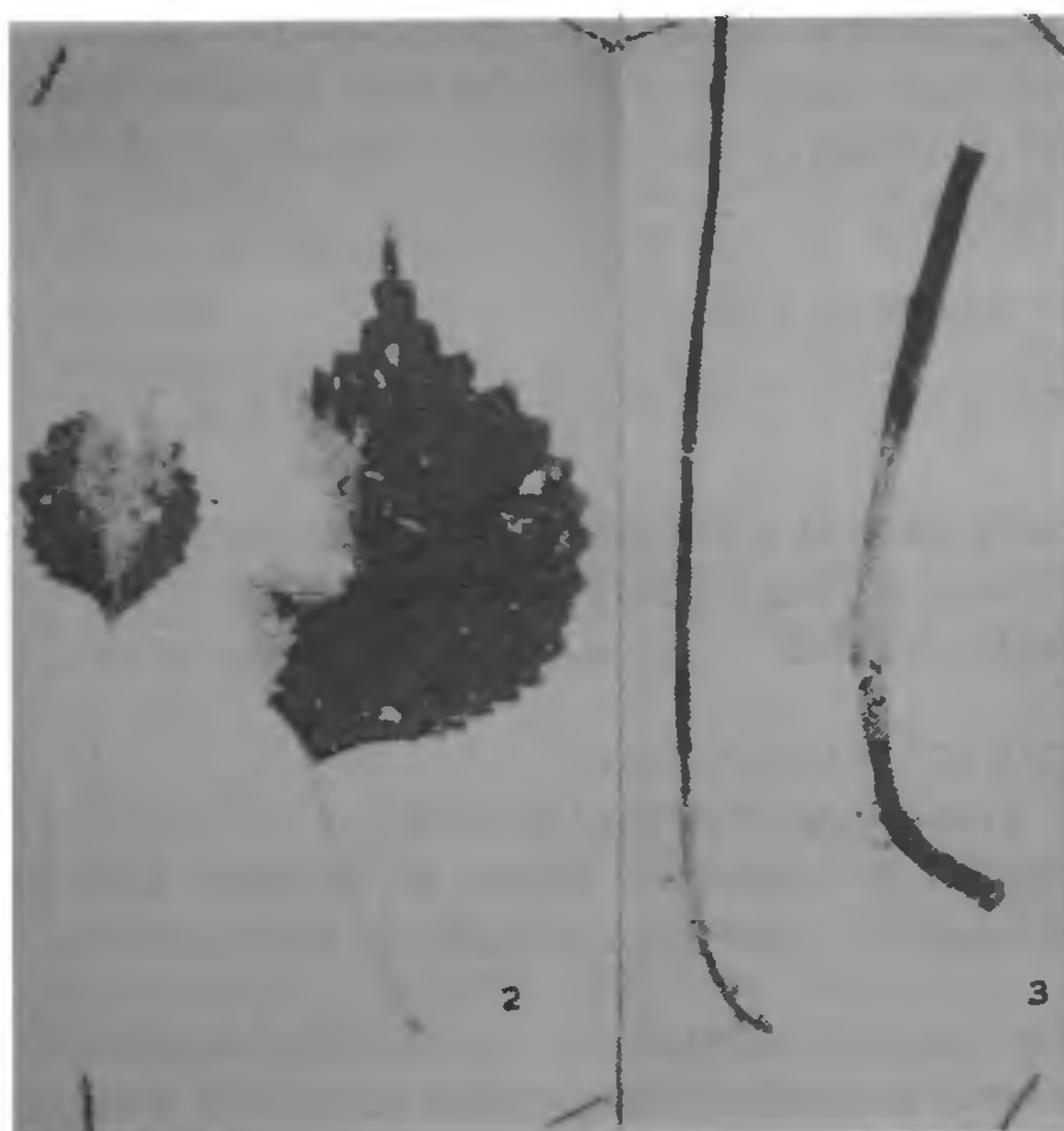


Figure 1. Symptoms on leaves at early stage.



Figures 2 and 3. 2. Blighting of leaves at later stage; and 3. White cane rot symptoms.

appeared as white-coloured spots which encircle mostly at the base (figure 3). It resulted in drying and complete death of the plant. The cane infection generally took place at the point of adherence of infected leaf when it falls during rains on the cane. The leaf blight took place at the early stage of the crop while cane rot is more common at a later stage. More than one cane may be infected in a clump. The sclerotia have been seen on the fallen infected leaves and infected canes.

The pathogen was isolated and identified as *Sclerotium rolfsii* Sacc (*Corticium rolfsii* Curzi)³. The pathogenicity of the pathogen was tested successfully

by inoculating the mycelial bits of seven-day-old culture on leaves and on canes. The symptoms appeared after 3 and 6 days on leaf and cane respectively. The test was repeated thrice. The identification of fungus was again confirmed by Dr J. E. M. Mordue of C.M.I. Kew, England (I.M.I. 298782).

The fungus mycelium appeared silky-white in the early stage of growth on potato-dextrose-agar medium which gradually lost its lustre and became somewhat dull in appearance. The mycelium was radiating and fast growing with aerial hyphae. Individual hyphae were hyaline, thin-walled, sparsely septate when young. The sclerotia developed in seven-day-old culture. They were like mustard seed in size with somewhat elongated in shape. Mature sclerotia were dark brown with well-developed rind, cortex and medulla in the cross-sections.

Amongst the diseases of ramie in India, white cane rot appeared to be the most important as it resulted in total death of the cane. Out of 36 germplasm lines of ramie, the cane rot was observed on 24 lines.

Although the *S. rolfsii* is having a wide host range but it is the first record of this fungus on ramie as a pathogen of cane rot in India and elsewhere as per review of literature^{2,4}.

The author is grateful to Dr J. E. M. Mordue, C.M.I. Kew, England, for confirming the identification of the fungus and to Dr N. K. Chakrabarti for encouragement.

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ON THE OCCURRENCE OF *CALAMUS METZIANUS* SCHLECHT IN KERALA

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THE genus *Calamus* Linn is represented in South India by about 14 species, of which many are

endemic. During a recent collection of *Calamus* from Nilambur forests of Kerala, we could get a species, which on closer examination turned out to be *Calamus metzianus* Schlecht. This species was localized in their natural habitat. *C. metzianus* is so far recorded only from Karnataka. The present paper shows its extended distribution from Karnataka to Kerala. A short description for an easy identification, phenology and habitat is given.

Calamus metzianus Schlecht in Linnaea XXVI: 727. 1853; Hook.f. Fl. Brit. India VI: 462. 1893; Becc. in Rec. Bot. Surv. Ind. II: 217. 1902; Ann. Roy. Bot. Gard. Calc. XI: 82 221. 1908; *C. rudentum* (non Lour) Mart. Hist. Nat. Palm. III: 340. 1823–1853.

Clustering, climbing high into the canopy; stem to 15 m long, with sheath to 2 cm in diameter, without sheath to 1 cm; internodes to 35 cm long. Leaf sheath pale green, densely armed with triangular yellowish spines, the largest to 2 cm long, with numerous much smaller spines in between. Ocrea absent. Knee conspicuous. Flagellum to 2.5 m. Leaf to 1 m, ecirrate, petiole to 5 cm, armed with small yellow spines with black tip, rachis armed with claw like spines, leaflets regular, long acuminate, gradually getting smaller towards the top, the largest to 37 cm × 2 cm; leaf tip armed with short bristles. Inflorescence male and

female superficially similar, to 2 m long with 4–5 partial inflorescences to 22.5 cm long, arising well above the mouth of the sheath, subtending bracts closely sheathing, armed with minute spines; rachillae to 3 cm long, subtending bracts narrow at the base and expanded into a cup above. Fruit ovoid, covered with 17 vertical rows of scales, scales light yellow with brown apex, grooved in the middle (figures 1–3).

Flowering and fruiting — January to May

Specimen examined: Kerala, Malappuram Dist., Nilambur (Thalamkolli) at an altitude of 50 m 27–3–1984. Renuka 3061 (KFRI Herbarium).

The authors are thankful to Dr S. K. Basu, B.S.I., Calcutta for helping to procure the necessary literature and to Dr. J.F. Veldkamp, Rijksherbarium for translating the original Latin description to English.

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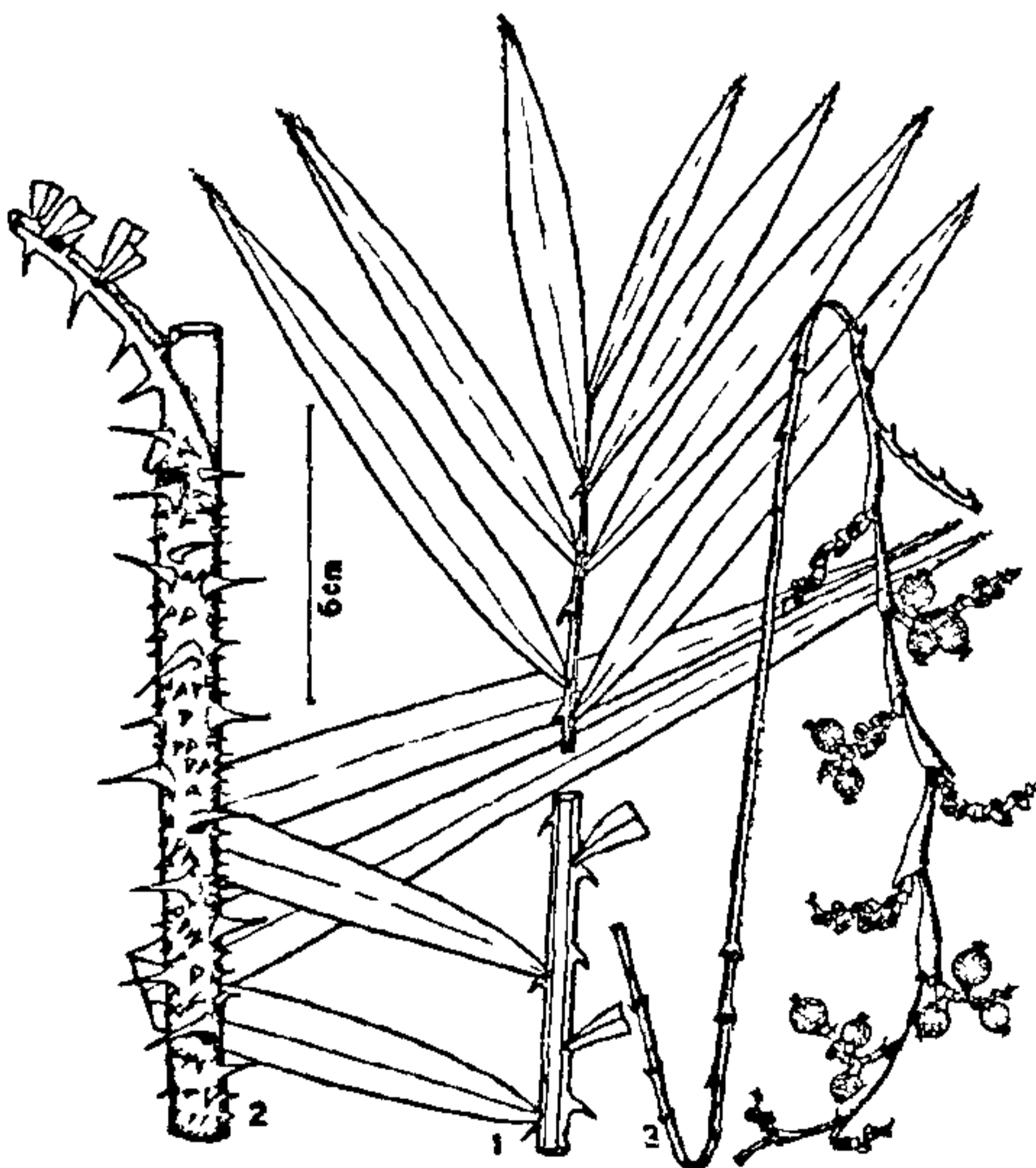
BIOTOXICITY OF *EXCOECARIA AGALLOCHA* L LATEX ON MARINE ORGANISMS

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EXCOECARIA AGALLOCHA L (Family—Euphorbiaceae), a mangrove plant, exudes acrid latex which is injurious to the human eyes and hence called 'blinding tree'^{1,2}. Except these reports on the irritating nature of the latex of *E. agallocha* on human eyes and skin, there are no reports concerning its impact on the organisms associated with this plant in the marine environment. It was therefore decided to focus attention on the biocidal properties of the latex of *E. agallocha* on some marine organisms.

Latex was collected from *E. agallocha* occurring in the Pitchavaram mangrove forests (Lat. 11°29'N; Long. 79°47'E) flanked between the water bodies of Vellar and Coleroon Riverine System, centrifuged at 2000 g for 10 min and the supernatant was used to prepare the test solutions. The test organisms numbering 16 (table 1) were collected from the Vellar estuary, acclimatized under laboratory conditions and treated *in vivo* in aquaria having 10⁻⁸, 10⁻⁶, 10⁻⁴ (V/V) latex, prepared in estuarine water



Figures 1–3. 1. Leaf; 2. Leaf sheath; and 3. Part of infructescence.