

The earliest record of *Parthenium hysterophorus* L. (Asteraceae) in India

Since 1956, several research papers have been published on the new records, distribution, poisonous nature, household uses, medicinal uses and control of the worst exotic weed species *Parthenium hysterophorus* L. (Asteraceae) in India. It is widely known that Rao¹ recorded this plant for the first time in India from Poona, Maharashtra, and generally the blame goes to the USA PL 480 scheme wheat seeds with which the seeds of

the said weed seed came to India by accident.

But the earliest record of this species in India goes back to 1814 by William Roxburgh, 'the father of Indian Botany' and the first salaried superintendent of the East India Company's Botanic Garden at Calcutta (presently renamed as Acharya Jagadish Chandra Bose Indian Botanic Garden, Howrah), in his book *Hortus Bengalensis*². He mentions this

species as an annual with flowering and fruiting in the rainy season; a native of West Indies, it came to the garden by accident in 1810 (Figure 1).

So the credit of recording this species in India for the first time by Roxburgh in 1814 should not be overlooked or forgotten.

1. Rao, R. S., *J. Bombay Nat. Hist. Soc.*, 1956, **54**, 218–220.
2. Roxburgh, W., *Hortus Bengalensis or A Catalogue of the Plants Growing in the Honourable East India Company's Botanic Garden at Calcutta*, The Mission Press, Serampore, 1814, p. 62.

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NECESSARIA.				
CALENDULA.	Europe.	☉		
officinalis.				
OTHONA.	Cape of G. H.			
bulbosa.	Cape of G. H.			
crispa.				
PARTHENIUM.	W. Indies. Accident, 1810.	☉	R. S.	R. I.
Hysterophorus.				

Figure 1.

Oral history – Jagadish Chandra Bose

In the past, various good biographies and articles have been written on J. C. Bose. One of the landmark works is: '*Acharya J. C. Bose – A Scientist and a Dreamer*', vols 1–5 by P. Bhattacharyya, M. Engineer, A. K. Das Gupta and R. Mitra (Bose Institute, Calcutta). D. P. Sen Gupta *et al.* published *Remembering Sir J. C. Bose* (IISc Press – World Scientific Publishing, 2009) as referred to by V. T. Yadugiri¹. The reading of Sen Gupta's paper in the book leaves no doubt about his knowledge on J. C. Bose². Yadugiri's article is based on an interview with the author. Her article is of interest to the readers, as it mentions a rather less known controversy between the British scientist A. Waller and J. C. Bose regard-

ing the discovery of vegetable electricity. It has been discussed in detail by S. Dasgupta³. I appreciate Yadugiri who has written a historical article by applying the 'oral history method'. I would like to suggest the following:

- Yadugiri has reproduced J. C. Bose's photograph and a facsimile of the patent application. She acknowledges Sen Gupta for the interview and material. In case the documents are in private possession, it might be mentioned. If not, the name of the archive can be given. It is of utmost importance as it helps those who want to do research in the same field.

- In case the interview was tape-recorded, it might be submitted in an

archive. It can be mentioned in the article; and made available to other researchers.

1. Yadugiri, V. T., *Curr. Sci.*, 2010, **98**, 975–977.
2. Sen Gupta, D. P., http://www.worldscibooks.com/etextbook/7263/7263_chap01.pdf, accessed on 14 April 2010.
3. Dasgupta, S., *Notes Rec. R. Soc. London*, 1998, **52**, 307–322.

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