

1265

Aeschynomene americana L

A new record for Sri Lanka

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Aeschynomene americana L., Sp. Pl. 713, 1753.

Benth. in Fl. Bras. XV, 61, 1859.

Williams in Fl. Trinidad and Tobago 1, 217, 1931.

Ae. mexicana Biroli ex Colla, Herb. Pedem. 2: 195, 1834.

Ae. mimosula Blume ex Miq., Fl. Ind. Bat. i: 276, 1855.

Ae. javanica Miq., var. *luxurians* Miq., Fl. Ind. Bat. i: 276, 1855.

Ae. tricholoma Standl & Steyern, Field Mus. Publ. Bot. 23: 10, 1943.

An usually erect, rarely decumbent, slender, suffruticose annual, about 1-1½ m. high, glandular hispid to sub glabrous; stipules peltate-appendiculate below the point of attachment, hispid, striate, ciliate; leaves about 2-5 cm. long, usually about 20-60 foliolate, sometimes more, ciliate; leaflets glabrous, falcate linear, 4-10 mm. long, 1-2 mm. wide and usually ciliate along one margin, and 2-several ciliate; roots small, beset with bacterial nodules; inflorescence, a few flowered raceme, usually a little longer than the subtending leaves, with the axis slightly zigzag, minutely hispid; bracts usually cordate acuminate, or sometimes truncate—flabelliform, striate, ciliate; bracteoles, linear to linear ovate, acute to acuminate, ciliate, flowers 5-10 mm. long, pale mauve, with close purple brown striations radiating from a yellow centre in the standard or vexillum; the wing blades too carrying purple brown striations; calyx bilabiate 3-6 mm. long, hispidulous; petals glabrous, clawed; the standard spatulate with the blade suborbiculate to broadly obcordate, 5-10 mm wide and 4-8 mm long, ciliate at the apex; the wing blades obliquely oblong, 5-8 mm long, 2 mm wide, entire or with a few cilia at the apex; the keel blades 4-5 mm long, 2.5-3.5 mm at the broadest point; stamens 5-8 mm long; fruit a loment, shortly stipitate, incurved, 2-3 cm long, 3-7 articulate the articles 3-5 mm wide, 3-6 mm long, glabrous to puberulent, with glandular hairs on the surface and sometimes along the margins, verrucose when mature, the margins thickened; seed small 2-3 mm long 1.5-2 mm. wide, dark brown.

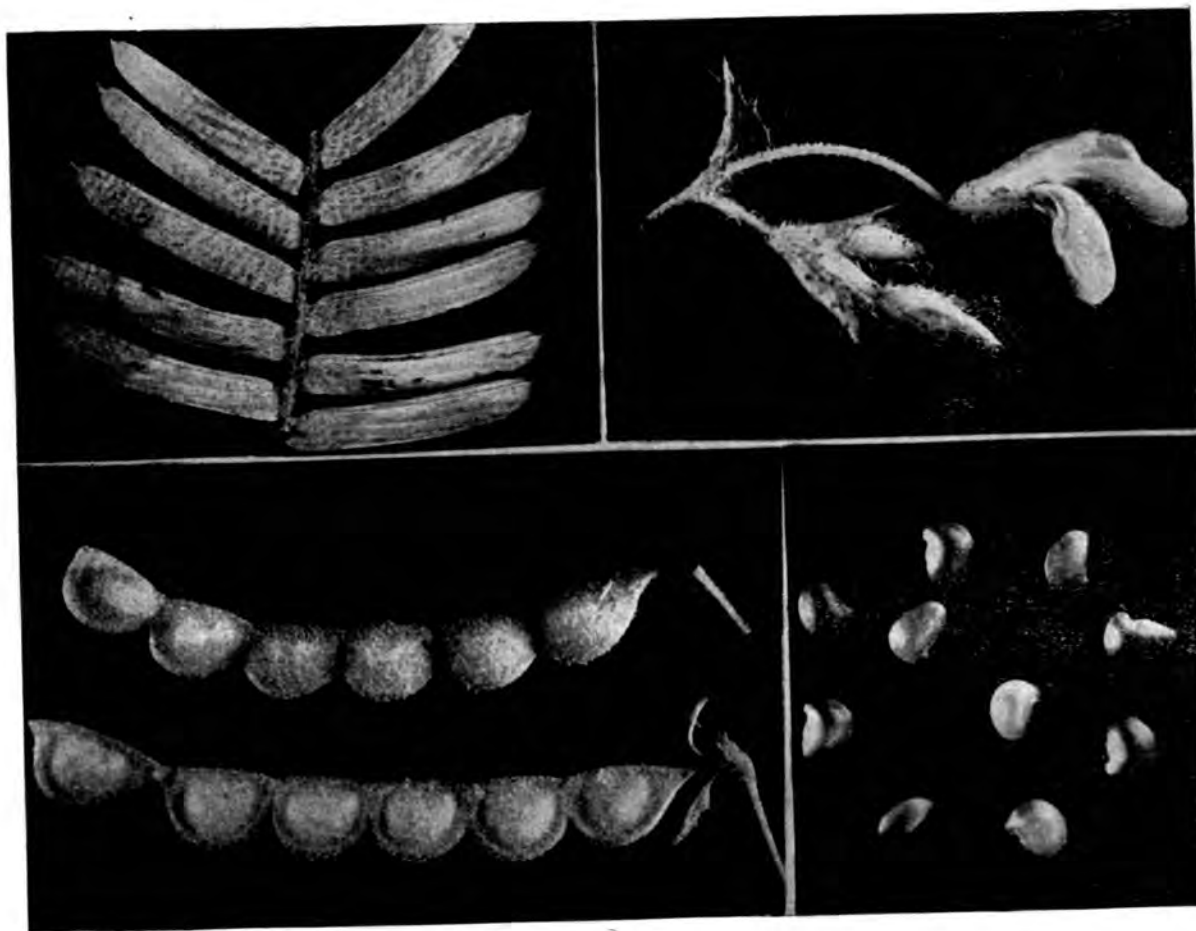
Hitherto only two species, of the genus *Aeschynomene* have been recorded for Sri Lanka *Aeschynomene aspera* L., a stout marsh herb common in wet rice fields and *Aeschynomene indica* L., a very slender much branched annual, often a bad weed in both wet and dry rice fields.

Occuring as a weed in rice fields *Aeschynomene americana* L. was first recorded for Sri Lanka at Narammala in the Kurunegala District in 1967. Probably introduced with the seed of some cover crops it has assumed weed proportion in the drier parts of the island, particularly in the rice fields of the North-Western and North-Central Provinces of Sri Lanka.

Distribution.—The species is distributed in the warmer parts of the World, chiefly in the Caribbean, Central America and Tropical South America. They are usually found in wet or moist situations.

Specimens examined.—North-Western Province, Narammala Kurunegala District, Amaratunga 1214 (PDA). This collection represents the first record for Ceylon : North-Central Province, Galkulama, Anuradhapura District, Amaratunga 2193 (PDA) ; Central Province, Galewela, Matale District, Amaratunga 2244 (P.D.A.) ; North-Central Province, Kekirawa, Anuradhapura District, Amaratunga 2245 (PDA) ; North-Central Province, Anuradhapura, Anuradhapura District, Amaratunga 2246 (PDA).

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Top left

Part of leaf showing 2-several
costate leaflets

Top right

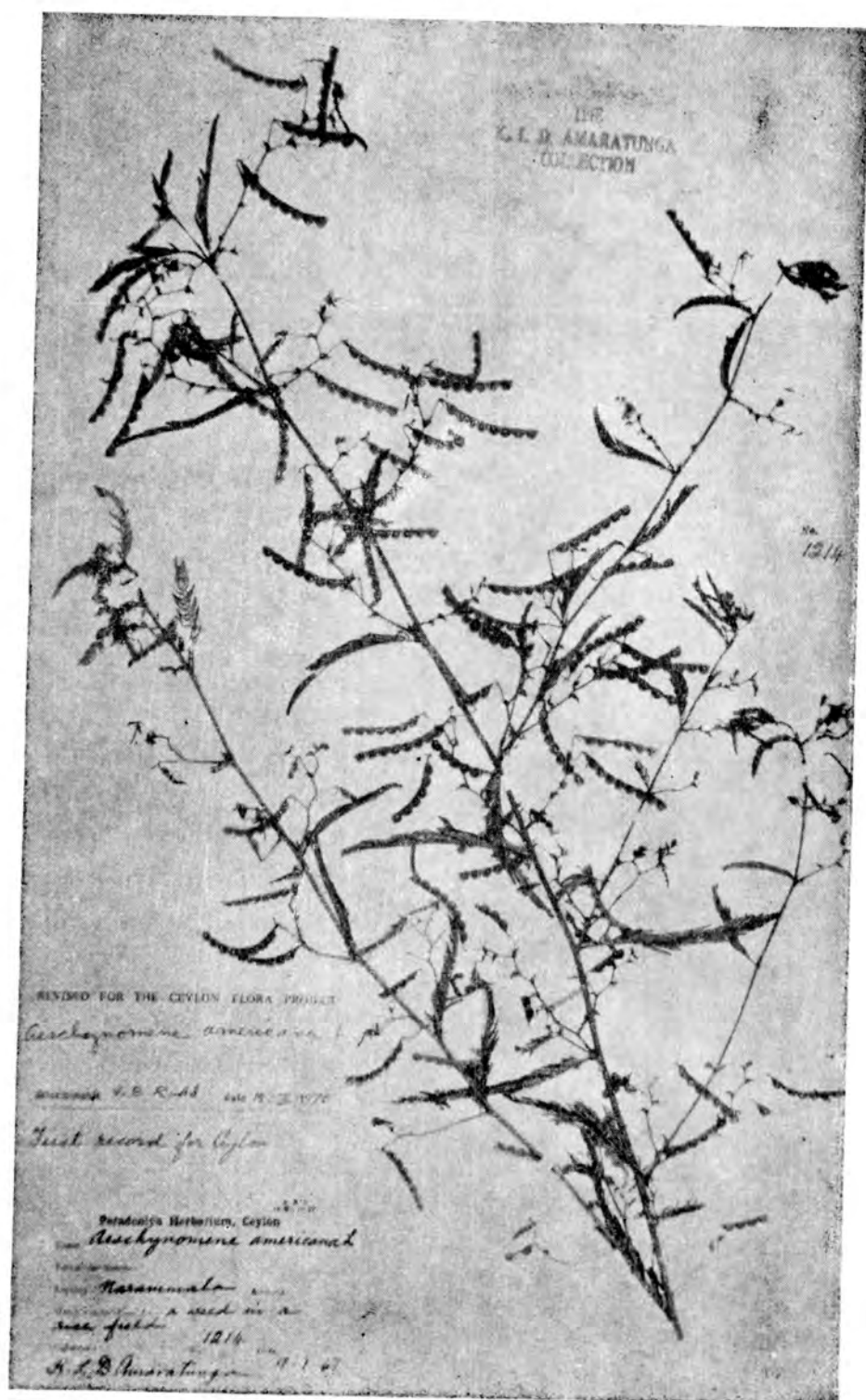
The few flowered raceme

Bottom left

Shortly stipitate fruit
a loment

Bottom right

Small dark brown seed



Photograph of *Aeschynomene americana*, L. Amaratunga 1214 (PDA).
Narammala, Kurunegala District, Amaratunga 1214 (PDA)