

## *Pterospermum truncatolobatum* Gagnepain (Sterculiaceae): A new addition to the flora of Nepal

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*Pterospermum truncatolobatum* is an angiosperm indigenous to Southeast Asia. It is most likely to grow naturally along forested stream banks. The best growing conditions are a seasonally moist then dry climate with access to full sunlight. *Pterospermum* is an angiosperm that is traditionally included in the Sterculiaceae family; however, it is grouped in the expanded Malvaceae family as well.

The classification *Pterospermum* is based on two Greek words, Pteron and Sperma, meaning “winged seed”. To date, only 10 species names within the genus have been accepted where as other twenty five species listed unresolved in the Plant List. About nine and five number of species under this genus *Pterospermum* have been reported from China and India. Only one species like *Pterospermum acerifolium* reported from Nepal (Press *et al*, 2000). During the course of plant collection this herbarium specimen was collected by Paudel, H. R. and Basnet B. K. (Fig.1). During the identification, this specimen did not match with any species of *Pterospermum* already reported from Nepal. After the detail study of specimens and available literatures (Shu, 2007), it has been identified as *Pterospermum truncatolobatum* Gagnepain.

### Description of the species

Trees, to 16 m tall; bark black, striate. Branchlets densely yellow-brown stellate. Stipules palmately 3-5-fimbriate, densely hairy, caducous; petiole robust, 4-12 mm; leaf blade oblong-obovate in outline, usually irregularly lobed, 8-16 × 3.5-11 cm, leathery, abaxially densely gray-white or yellow-brown stellate tomentose, adaxially glabrous or minutely hairy along midrib, base cordate or obliquely cordate, apex truncate and 3-5-lobed, central lobe acute or acuminate, 1—2

cm. Flowers solitary, nearly sessile; epicalyx lobes fimbriate. Sepals linear, relatively thick, 4.5-6.5 × ca. 0.4 cm, abaxially densely brown tomentose, adaxially silvery white villous. Petals linear-falcate, 3-6 × 0.4-0.5 cm, base tapering. Stamens ca. 3.5 cm; staminodes filiform, ca. 5 cm, glabrous. Ovary ovoid, hairy. Fruiting pedicel to 8 mm; capsule woody, ovoid or ovoid-cylindrical, prominently 5-angular and 5-grooved, ca. 12 × 7 cm, densely brown stellate tomentose, verrucose or not, base narrowed into 2-3 × ca. 1 cm stipe. Seeds 6-10 per locule, in 2 rows, 4-5.5 cm including wing, wing linear, up to 4.4 cm, apex obtuse or truncate. Fl. Jul.



Figure 1: Herbarium specimen of *Pterospermum truncatolobatum*

Silviculture value: There is an array of common names for *Pterospermum truncatolobatum*, depending on the region where it is grown. It is commonly referred to as Kanak Champa, Muchakunda or Karnikar. Other common names include Bayur Tree, Maple-Leafed Bayur Tree,

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and Dinner Plate Tree. The reddish wood of the tree can be used for planking. Because the wood is soft, it is not considered to be very strong. However it is incredibly durable and somewhat flexible, making it perfect for planking and wooden boxes. The tree has been categorized as fossil wood some of the species are under the IUCN red list. Mostly planted as an ornamental or shade tree, the leaves, flowers, and wood. The leaves can also serve as a primitive method of reinforcing roofs and preventing leaks.

The pubescent under surface of the leaves is said to stop bleeding and can be used as tinder for a means of sparking fires. The flowers of the tree can serve as a pleasant perfume and can even keep away insects. The flowers also provide a number of medicinal uses. An effective tonic can be prepared, as well as being used as a cure for inflammation, ulcers, blood problems, and even tumors. Its bark is also supposed to be used in case of scabies and topical preparation like lipsticks.

#### References

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