Elatostema monandrum (Buch.-Ham. ex D.Don) H.Hara (Urticaceae): A New Distributional Record for Balaghat District, Madhya Pradesh, India

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***Abstract*: During a recent floristic exploration of the Ramrama Waterfalls area of Balaghat District, Madhya Pradesh, a small herb of the family Urticaceae was observed on a moist, shaded, moss-rich substrate. Based on the field photographs, the specimen is provisionally identified as Elatostema monandrum (Buch.-Ham. ex D.Don) H.Hara. The diagnostic features visible in the specimen include a small herbaceous habit, apparently alternate and sessile leaves with an asymmetric base, serrate upper margins, and dense axillary clusters of minute flowers. The occurrence is noteworthy because the species is already documented from the former Hoshangabad (now Narmadapuram) District of Madhya Pradesh; therefore, the Balaghat collection should be treated as a new district record rather than a first record for the state. The present note provides a concise taxonomic account, habitat information, diagnostic observations and photographic documentation. A voucher specimen with complete reproductive material should be deposited in a recognized herbarium before the record is formally submitted for publication.**

***Keywords*: Elatostema monandrum; Urticaceae; Balaghat; Ramrama Waterfalls; Madhya Pradesh; floristic diversity.**

1. Introduction

Elatostema J.R.Forst. & G.Forst. is a genus of Urticaceae that includes small herbs and subshrubs generally associated with moist and shaded habitats. Members of the genus commonly possess apparently alternate, distichous leaves and axillary, densely clustered inflorescences (Hooker, 1888; Kew Science, 2026).

The accepted name of the taxon is Elatostema monandrum (Buch.-Ham. ex D.Don) H.Hara. Elatostema surculosum Wight is treated as a synonym in current taxonomic databases (Kew Science, 2026; India Flora Online, 2026). India Flora Online also lists E. surculosum as a synonym of E. monandrum and records the species from Hoshangabad District, Madhya Pradesh (Mudgal et al 1997; India Flora Online, 2026).

The present observation was made at Ramrama Waterfalls, Balaghat District, during floristic exploration. A search of the readily accessible literature and online floristic resources did not reveal a published record specifically from Balaghat District. The occurrence is therefore reported here as a new district-level distributional record, subject to confirmation by a properly prepared voucher specimen.

2. Materials and Methods

Field observations were made at Ramrama Waterfalls, Balaghat District, Madhya Pradesh. The plant was photographed in situ and a field specimen was examined for vegetative and reproductive characters. Identification was undertaken by comparing visible characters with published descriptions and current online taxonomic resources. The voucher specimen is collected and deposited in Narmada College, Herbarium

Locality: Ramrama Waterfalls, Balaghat District, Madhya Pradesh, India
Date of collection:15/09/2026
Collector: Dr. Ravi Upadhyay
Collector's number:BG-12-926
GPS coordinates: 21.85°N and 79.97°E
Voucher herbarium: 32

3. Conception of the Study

Elatostema monandrum (Buch.-Ham. ex D.Don) H.Hara

Family: Urticaceae

Order: Rosales

Basionym: Procris monandra Buch.-Ham. ex D.Don

Synonym: Elatostema surculosum Wight

The taxonomic authority and synonymy follow Kew Science (2026) and India Flora Online (2026). The morphological description should be compared with Hooker (1888), the Flora of Bhutan treatment, and a verified modern taxonomic source before publication Diagnostic description. Small erect herb,

generally about 5–15 cm tall, with glabrous to puberulous stems.

Leaves apparently alternate and usually sessile, with a small rudimentary leaf occurring opposite the normal leaf. Normal leaves ovate to elliptic or ovate-lanceolate, approximately 2–5 cm long, acute or acuminate, asymmetric at the base and shallowly to deeply serrate, especially in the upper half. Small opposite leaves are oblong and entire. Inflorescences are axillary and densely clustered; male heads are sessile or shortly pedunculate, while female receptacles are sessile with connate bracts. Achenes are small and fusiform.

4. Field Photographs and Morphological Assessment

A. Study Design

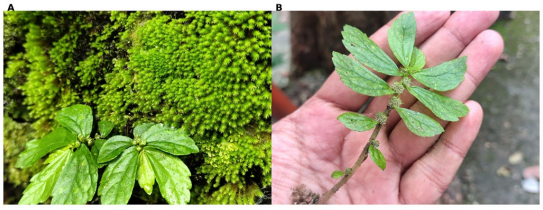


Plate 1. Elatostema specimen observed at Ramrama Waterfalls, Balaghat District. (A) Moist, shaded, moss-covered habitat with associated vegetation; (B) leafy shoot showing sessile, serrate leaves and dense axillary flower clusters. Field photographs by Dr. Ravi Upadhyay.

Assessment: The second field photograph (Plate 1B) shows a combination of characters that is strongly compatible with E. monandrum, especially the small herbaceous habit, sessile/asymmetric serrate leaves and dense axillary flower clusters. The first photograph (Plate 1A) is used as a habitat photograph.

5. Distribution and Significance

Current taxonomic sources recognize E. monandrum as a species of the Indian subcontinent and adjoining regions. India Flora Online lists E. monandrum under the synonym E. surculosum and specifically records Madhya Pradesh: Hoshangabad District. Kew's Plants of the World Online treats E. surculosum as a synonym of E. monandrum var. monandrum. This record would extend the documented distribution of the species within the state and add useful information to the floristic inventory of the Balaghat landscape.

6. Habitat and Ecology

The Ramrama Waterfalls locality provides a humid and shaded microhabitat with moss-covered rock surfaces, conditions that agree well with the habitat reported for E. monandrum. India Flora Online describes the species under E. surculosum as occurring on moss-covered rocks in damp and shaded places. Such specialized microhabitats may support small Urticaceae herbs that can be overlooked during conventional vegetation surveys.

7. Conclusion

The specimen photographed at Ramrama Waterfalls is provisionally identified as *Elatostema monandrum* (Buch.-Ham. ex D.Don) H.Hara. The combination of habit, apparently sessile asymmetric leaves, serrate margins, dense axillary clusters and moist shaded habitat is compatible with the species.

References

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