

The genus *Ceropegia* L. is popularly known as the Lantern flower plant belongs to the family Asclepiadaceae (Subfamily Asclepiadoideae; family Apocynaceae as per APG IV). The name *Ceropegia* is probably derived from the ancient Greek word *kiropigion* (candle fountain) that means *candelabrum* in Latin (means candle stick, candle stand/lamp stand or branched candle stick). They are geophytic herbs, usually twining, trailing or sometimes having erect stem. The rootstock is usually tuberous, fasciculate, fibrous or with rhizomatous root system.

*Ceropegia* comprises of about 350 species world-wide distributed from Africa, Gulf countries, India, South-East Asia to North-East Australia. In India it contains 59 species of which 44 species are endemic. A majority of the species are concentrated in Western Ghats including 39 endemic species. Apart from Western Ghats they also occur in Himalayas and North-East India and in Andaman & Nicobar Islands. Usually, they occur in the lateritic plateaus, evergreen forests, shola forests, montane grasslands, moist deciduous forests, dry deciduous forests, scrub thickets, forest borders, semi-arid grasslands, coastal areas etc.

The *Ceropegia* genus is unique for its differently shaped flower, a strategic adaptation for achieving pollination. The flower has tubular corolla with swollen base, somewhat resembling the lantern. At the mouth of corolla tube, the corolla lobes form a cage like structure with openings through which insects can enter. They also comprise osmophoric tissue for olfactory attraction of pollinating flies, as well as surfaces promoting the trapping of attracted flies. The cylindrical flower tube has smooth inner surfaces and downward-pointing hairs to block the exit, and to temporarily trap the flies inside the swollen corolla base which encloses the gynostegium. As the pollinators move at the base of the corolla, they collect pollen. As the flower ages and begins to wilt, the hair lining the tube of the corolla droops or falls off allowing the pollinator to escape. As the pollinator enters another flower, pollination is accomplished. The *Ceropegia* pitfall flowers exhibits the successful pollination mechanism combined with floral chemistry and morphology.

Tubers of many *Ceropegia* species are used as edible wild source by many local communities. Most of the *Ceropegia* species are threatened in wild due to habitat destruction, fragmentation and collection of tubers for consumption by locals. Awareness, conservation and restoration is of utmost important.



**Ceropegia anantii** S.R. Yadav, Sardesai & S.P. Gaikwad



**Ceropegia anjanerica** Malpure, M.Y. Kamble & S.R. Yadav



**Ceropegia candelabrum** L.



**Ceropegia decaisneana** Wight



**Ceropegia concanensis** Kambale, Chandore & S.R. Yadav



**Ceropegia andamanica** Sreek., Veenakumari & Prashanth



**Ceropegia angustifolia** Wight



**Ceropegia dolichophylla** Schltr.



**Ceropegia elegans** Wall.



**Ceropegia ansariana** Murug. & A.A. Mao



**Ceropegia bulbosa** Roxb.



**Ceropegia evansii** McCann



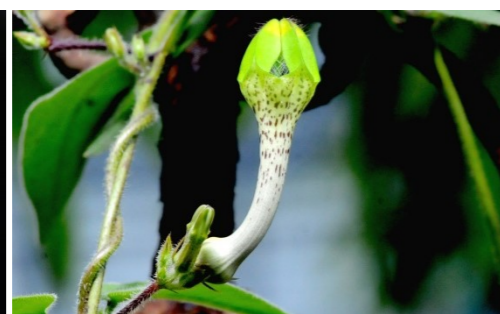
**Ceropegia fantastica** Sedgw.



# THE LANTERN FLOWERS OF INDIA: GENUS *CEROPEGIA* L.



*Ceropegia fimbriifera* Bedd.



*Ceropegia hirsuta* Wight & Arn.



*Ceropegia ravikumariana* Kambale & Gnanasek.



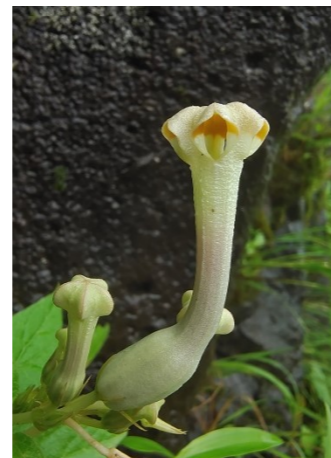
*Ceropegia rollae* Hemadri



*Ceropegia huberi* Ansari



*Ceropegia intermedia* Wight



*Ceropegia sahyadrica* Ansari & B.G.P. Kulk.



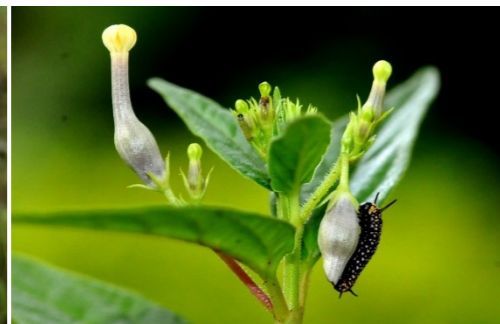
*Ceropegia santapau* Wadhwa & Ansari



*Ceropegia spiralis* Wight



*Ceropegia lawii* Hook.f.



*Ceropegia maccannii* Ansari



*Ceropegia mahabalei* Hemadri & Ansari



*Ceropegia media* (H. Huber) Ansari



*Ceropegia thwaitesii* Hook.



*Ceropegia vincifolia* Hook.



*Ceropegia wallichii* Wight



*Ceropegia oculata* Hook.



*Ceropegia odorata* Nimmo ex Hook.f.



*Ceropegia panchganiensis* Blatt. & McCann



*Ceropegia pubescens* Wall.

### Cover page photo legends

*Ceropegia attenuata* Hook.

*Ceropegia jainii* Ansari & B.G.P. Kulk.

*Ceropegia juncea* Roxb.

*Ceropegia noorjahaniae* M.A. Ansari

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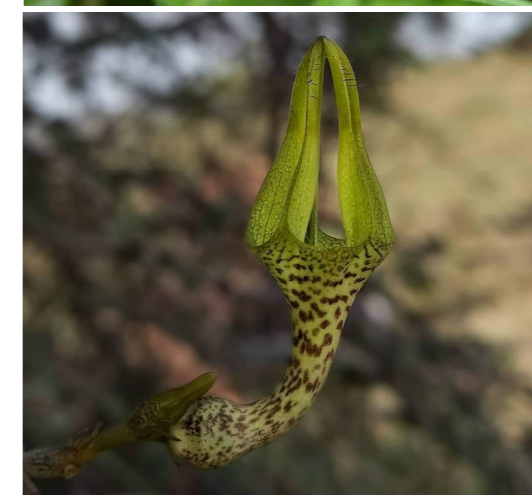
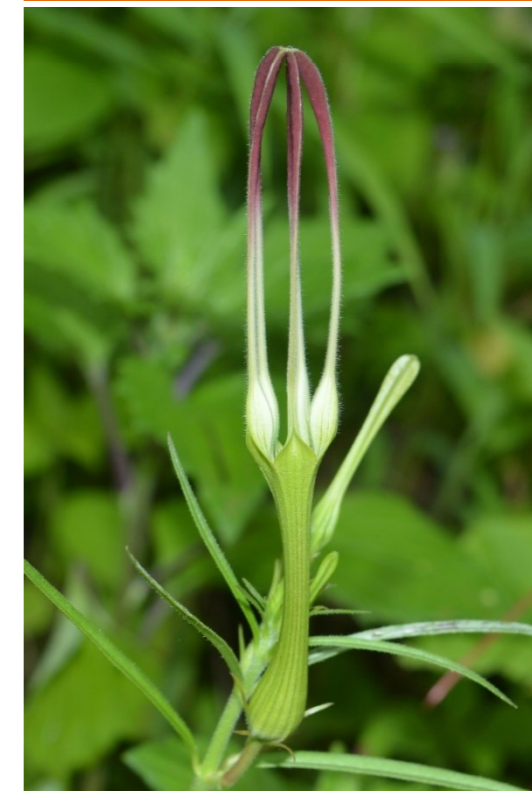
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