

A new species, a new combination and a new subsection of *Cycas* from Odisha, northern Eastern Ghats of India

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ABSTRACT

Cycas circinalis var. *orixensis* Haines (Cycadaceae) is raised to species rank and a new species, *Cycas nayagarhensis* is described and illustrated from the state of Odisha in the northern Eastern Ghats of India. Both of these Odisha *Cycas* species described here, have characteristic megasporophylls having spinescent lateral teeth and a spear-like long apical spine. Male cones are the most peculiar in having microsporophylls with upturned, one to variously forked apical spines. *Cycas nayagarhensis* is distinguished from *C. orixensis* by its massive arborescent stem, large male cones, with microsporophylls having entire or variously forked apical spine and radially compressed ovules. A comparative table of the northern Eastern Ghats *Cycas* and a key to all the Indian species are provided. The infrageneric classification of the genus *Cycas* is modified and a new Subsection Orixenses under Section *Cycas* is created here to accommodate these two morphologically distinct endemic taxa from Odisha.

Key words: *Cycas orixensis*, *Cycas nayagarhensis*, Eastern Ghats, Odisha, India