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RESEARCH ARTICLE

DIFFERENTIAL ACTIVITY OF FOUR SELECTED ENZYMES IN THE PISTILS AND POLLEN GRAINS OF TWO VARIETIES OF *HAMELIA PATENS* JACQ. (RUBIACEAE) FOLLOWING COMPATIBLE AND INCOMPATIBLE POLLINATION.

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Abstract

Hamelia patens Jacq. commonly called fire bush, is a fast growing, semi woody and evergreen perennial shrub of the family Rubiaceae. It is a native of central and southern Florida. It is chiefly grown for the showy bunch of beautiful flowers. In tropical America, local people make use of the extract of its leaves and stem, for curing diseases such as skin rashes, sores, insect sting and various fungal diseases of the skin because of its antibacterial and antifungal properties. In India this plant is particularly cultivated on a wider scale in home gardens as an ornamental plant. In *H. patens*, sexual reproduction is difficult due to self- incompatibility, while crossing between morphologically different plants of two accessions gives viable seeds. In the present study two varieties of *H. patens*, *H. patens* variety *patens* and *H. patens* variety *glabrawas* chosen to study the activity of four enzymes, namely, peroxidase, acid phosphatase, polyphenol oxidase, esterase and total protein. Three developmental stages were identified for both the plants. Controlled pollinations were carried out in the two plants. Stigma of two varieties were pollinated with its own pollen and also pollen from other variety. Crossed stigma showed higher activity of all the enzymes than self- pollinated and stigma from flowers before anthesis. The aim of the study was to understand if pollination with self and crossed pollen grains has any influence on the activity of the four selected enzymes in post pollinated pistils. The enhanced activity of these enzymes indicates their role mainly in the defence mechanism than anything to do with stigma receptivity. The results have been discussed in the light of the available literature.

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Introduction:-

Hamelia patens Jacq. is commonly known as scarlet bush or firebush. It is a large perennial shrub or small tree. Also, the plants are used in folk medicine against a range of ailments. All parts of *H. patens* are used in natural medicine. A number of active compounds have been found in firebush, such as apigenin, ephedrine, flavanones, isomaruquine, isopteropodine, maruquine, narirutins, oxindole alkaloids, palmirine, pteropodine, rosmarinic acid, rumberine, rutin, seneciophylline, speciophylline, isopteropodine, stigmast-4-ene-3,6-dione and tannin (Cavanagh 1963, Duke 2007, Aquino et al 1990, Ahmad et al 2012 & Paniagua et al 2012) (-)-hameline, tetrahydroalstonine, aricine, uncarine F, stigmast-4-ene-3, 6-dione and 5,7,2-,5- -tetrahydroxyflavanone 7- rutiroside (Aquino 1990, Ahmad et al 2012 & and

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Paniagua et al 2012). The bark also contains significant amounts of tannins. Firebush contains crude protein and has *in vitro* digestibility (Ibrahim 1997). The plant possesses analgesic, antispetic, anti-inflammatory, febrifuge, refrigerant properties. Fruit of *H.patensis* edible (Irobi et al 1996) and the plant is used in herbal medicine to treat athlete's foot, skin lesions and rash, insect bites, nervous shock, inflammation, rheumatism, headache, asthma, and dysentery (Lachoria et 1999 and Liogier 1999). Ethanolic extract of different parts like leaf, stem and root of *H. patens* shows anthelmintic and antimicrobial activity (Sapana 2012). It has been reported to exhibit that this plant possesses anti-diarrhoeal activity (Salud 1996). It is also used for insect bites, menstrual disorders, uterine and ovarian affliction (Shrisha et al 2011). Cytostatic and cytotoxic activity against tumor cell lines (Taylor et al 2013) and wound healing activity (Sandhya et al 2011) with *H. patens*. Antifungal properties of aqueous extracts of leaves, flowers and fruits of *H.patens* was also reported (Abubacker 2013). Antibacterial properties (Camporese 2003), vasorelaxant (Reyes & Chilpa 2004) and toxicity and antinociceptive effects of *H.patens* also studied (Castro 2015).

Development of fruits with healthy seeds is the culmination of the natural process of pollination and fertilization. Seeds are important for the plant for propagation of the progeny and for a breeder to assess the results of breeding while developing new cultivars. Louis and Radhamany (2009) and Louis et al (2012) reported RNase based gametophytic incompatibility in *H.patens*. Since legitimate and illegitimate pollinations are affected by alternations in the metabolic status of stigma and style tissues (Dhaliwal 1985), it would be imperative to study the changes in the enzyme activities of stigma-style tissues following compatible and incompatible pollination. Since the enzymes control biochemical reactions, and their synthesis is under the control of specific gene(s), any change in the activity of an enzyme would reflect in the pattern of gene expression and corresponding metabolic events in the cell. Hence, the enzymes can be used as tools to study the problem of self-incompatibility at the biochemical level. In the present investigation, changes in the activities of peroxidase, polyphenol oxidase, esterase and acid phosphatase along with total amount of protein have been studied in anther lobe and pistil of two varieties of *H.Patens*; *Hamelia patens* variety *patens* and *Hamelia patens* variety *glabra*, in an attempt to understand the biochemical aspects of self-incompatibility in *Hamelia*.

Materials and methods:-

Two varieties of *Hamelia patens* Jacq. viz. *Hamelia patens* var. *patens* (Fig. 1) and *Hamelia patens* var. *glabra* (Fig. 2) maintained in the Botanic garden, Department of Botany, University of Kerala, Thiruvananthapuram, and pistils from flowers of these two plants were used in the present investigation.

Controlled pollination:-

Emasculation and controlled pollinations were carried out in both the varieties of *H. patens*. Early in the morning, a day before controlled pollination, mature flower buds were emasculated and bagged with butter paper bags at 'pre-balloon' stage, 18–24 h before pollination. For self-pollination, flower bud at the 'balloon' stage was pollinated by dusting the pollen grains from the same flower on the surface of the stigma and bagged. In the cross pollination, variety *patens* was considered as female plant and variety *glabra* considered as male plant. Following samples were collected for the test of isozymes.

1. Sample I-Self-pollinated pistil from the variety *patens*.
2. Sample II- Un-pollinated pistil from the variety *patens*.
3. Sample III-Self-pollinated pistil from the variety *glabra*.
4. Sample IV- Un-pollinated Pistil from the variety *glabra*.
5. Sample V-Pollinated pistil from the cross between variety *patens* x variety *glabra*.
6. Sample VI-Stamen from the variety *patens* after self pollination
7. Sample VII-Stamen from the variety *patens* before pollination
8. Stage VIII-Stamen from variety *glabra* after self pollination
9. Stage IX- Stamen from the variety *glabra* before pollination

Preparation of enzyme extract:-

Part of the pistil without ovary was collected and frozen in -40°C . Sample weighing about 450 mg were homogenized with 9 ml of cold 5% KCl (w/v) using a pre-chilled mortar and pestle. The homogenate was centrifuged at $0 \pm 2^{\circ}\text{C}$ at 10,000 rpm for 10 min. The clear supernatant was used directly for the assay of enzyme activities and estimation of protein (Jorgensen et al 1953, Ching et al 1987, Neog et al 2003 and McInnis et al 2006).

Assay of peroxidase:-

The activity of peroxidase was assayed according to Malik and Singh (1980). The assay mixture containing 2.5 ml of phosphate buffer (pH 6.5, 0.1 M), 0.2 ml of diluted enzyme extract and 0.1 ml of *o*-dianisidine (1 mg/ml methanol) was incubated at 28°C in a water bath for 2 min. The reaction was started by adding 0.2 ml of H₂O₂. The change in absorbency was recorded at 430 nm using a stopwatch at 30 s interval for 5 min. The enzyme activity was expressed in terms of the rate of increase of absorbance per hour per mg protein.

Assay of acid phosphatase:-

The reaction mixture contained 0.5 ml of substrate solution (50 mg *p*-nitrophenyl phosphate in 10 ml water + 25 ml of acetate buffer, 0.1 M, pH 4.8) and 0.1 ml of suitably diluted enzyme extract. The mixture was incubated at 35°C for 30 min. The reaction was stopped by adding 2.4 ml of 0.1 N NaOH and the absorbance was recorded at 410 nm. The enzyme activity was expressed in terms of micromoles of *p*-nitrophenol released/h/mg protein Malik and Singh (1980).

Assay of polyphenol oxidase:-

The polyphenol oxidase activity was measured as per the method of Sarvesh and Reddy (1988). The assay mixture (3 ml) contained 2.0 ml of 2 M carbonate-bicarbonate buffer (pH 10), 0.15 M of *o*-catechol and 0.2 ml of suitably diluted enzyme extract. The assay mixture was incubated for 2 min at 25°C. The reaction was stopped by adding 0.5 ml of 5% (v/v) H₂SO₄. The change in absorbency was recorded at 420 nm for 2 min. The enzyme activity was expressed in terms of micromoles of quinone formed/h/mg protein.

Assay of esterase:-

Esterase activity was assayed by naphthol-acetate method (Sawhney et al 1981). The assay mixture contained 2.0 ml of 20 mM phosphate buffer of pH 10, 0.1 M of 1-naphthol acetate and 0.2 ml of suitably diluted enzyme extract. Change in absorbance was recorded at 420 nm for 3 min and enzyme activity expressed in terms of micromoles of naphthol-acetate produced/h/mg protein.

Total protein:-

The amount of protein was determined according to the standard method (Bradford 1976 and Lowry et al 1951), using Bovine serum albumin as standard.

Statistical analysis:-

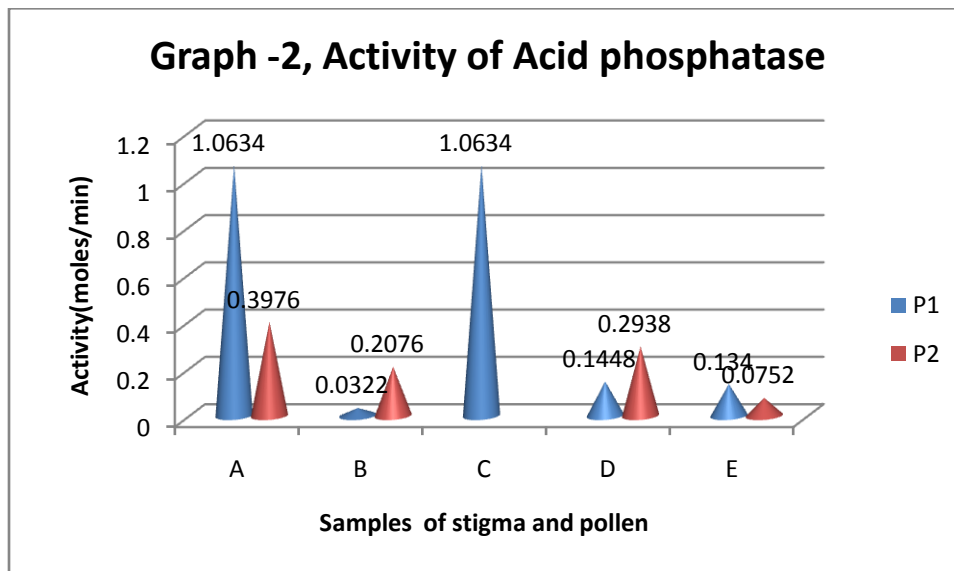
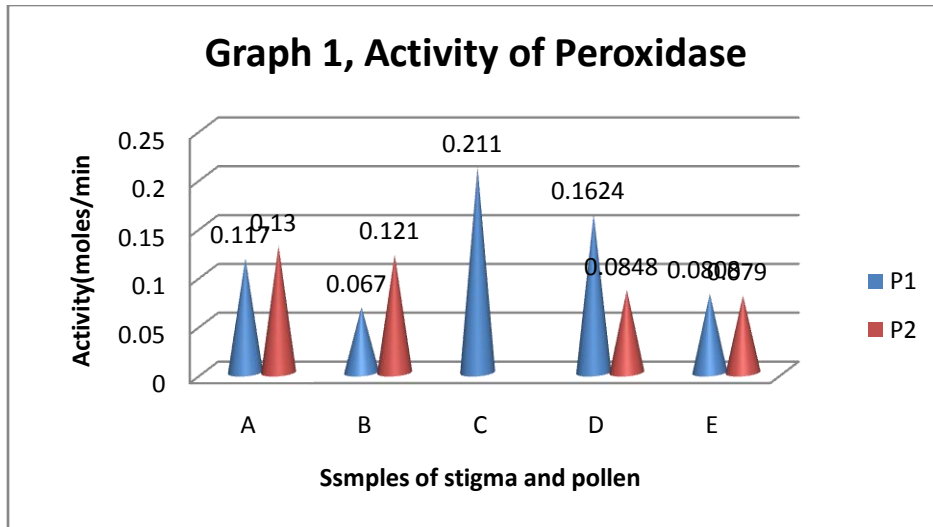
The data were collected from five sets of experiments and were subjected to analysis of standard deviation (Table-1 and Graph 1-5).

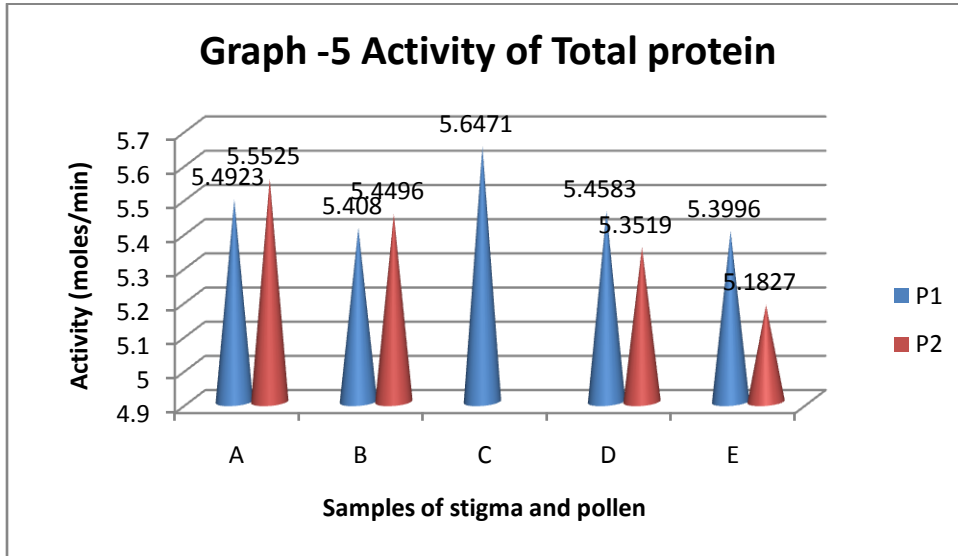
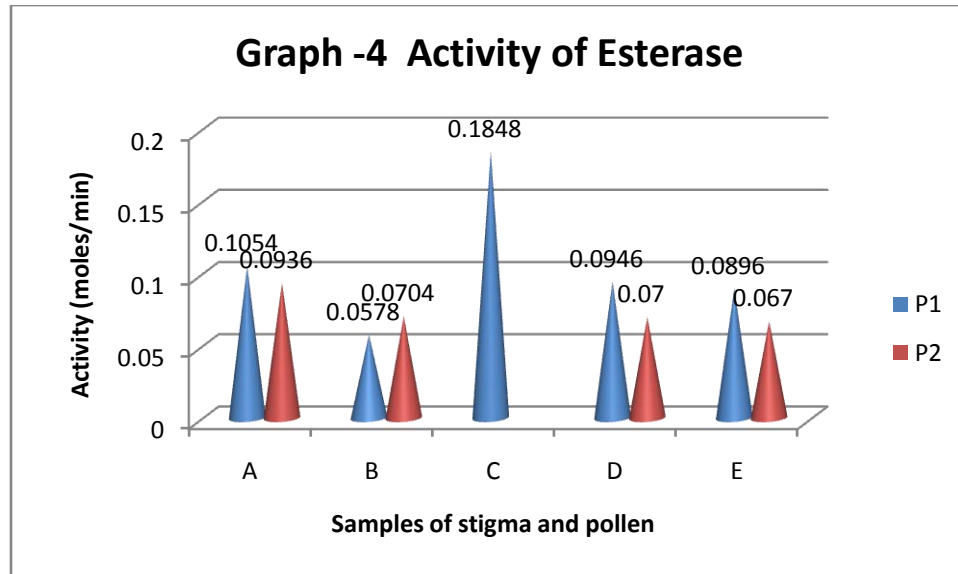
Results:-

Table I:- Level of peroxidase, acid phosphatase, polyphenol oxidase and esterase on protein content after self and cross-pollination in two accessions of *H. patens*

Sl. No	Samples	Peroxidase [h/mg(Mean±SD)]	Acid phosphatase [h/mg(Mean±SD)]	Polyphenol oxidase [h/mg(Mean±SD)]	Esterase [h/mg (Mean±SD)]	Total protein [Mean±SD]
1	Sample I	0.117±0.585	1.0634±0.0011	0.1358±0.0008	0.1054±0.0018	5.4923±0.0658
2	Sample II	0.067±0.0054	0.0322±0.00216	0.1072±0.0008	0.0578±0.0008	5.4080±0.1163
3	Sample III	0.130±0	0.3976±0.0011	0.1122±0.0008	0.0936±0.0020	5.5525±0.0903
4	Sample IV	0.121±0.0004	0.2076±0.0011	0.0952±0.0008	0.0704±0.0024	5.4496±0.0386
5	Sample V	0.211±0	1.0634±0.0011	0.1882±0.0008	0.1848±0.0008	5.6471±0.0257
6	Sample VI	0.1624 ± 0.0005	0.1448 ± 0.0012	0.1648 ± 0.0008	0.0946 ± 0.0011	5.4583 ± 0.0332
7	Sample VII	0.0808 ± 0.0008	0.134 ± 0.0012	0.105 ± 0.001	0.0896 ± 0.0011	5.3996 ± 0.0856
8	Sample VIII	0.0848 ± 0.0008	0.2938 ± 0.002	0.1528 ± 0.0008	0.07 ± 0.0075	5.3519 ± 0.0385
9	Sample IX	0.079 ± 0.00125	0.0752 ± 0.0017	0.1126 ± 0.0005	0.067 ± 0.001	5.1827 ± 0.0336

Values are mean ±sd of six sets of samples





Graph 1-5:-Activity of the enzymes, peroxidase, acid phosphatase, polyphenol oxidase, esterase and total protein in different stages of stigma and anther(A-sample I and sample III, B-sample II and sample VI, C-sample V, D- sample VI and sample VIII, E-sample VII and sample IX)

Discussion:-

Comparative analysis of the activity of four isozymes namely peroxidase, acid phosphatase, polyphenol oxidase and esterase in *H.patens* var. *patens* and *H.patens* var. *glabra* were carried out to find out the differences in the metabolic activity of unpollinated, self-pollinated and cross-pollinated pistils of self-incompatible *H.patens* varieties in the present study. Peroxidase has been implicated as an indicator of stigma receptivity (Galen & Plowright 1987, Dupuis & Dumas 1990, Dafni & MotteMaues 1998 and Stpiczynska 2003) and mere adherence of pollen grains to stigma has been shown to increase peroxidase activity independent of the penetration of pollen tube (Galen & Plowright 1987, Bredemeijer 1982, Bredemeijer 1984, Bredemeyer & Blaas 1975, Bredemeyer 1975, Bredemeyer 1979 and Linskens 1969). In the present study, significantly higher activity of peroxidase was observed in cross-pollinated styles were noticed when compared to self-pollinated and unpollinated stigma in both the varieties studied. The mean value was found high in variety *glabra* (0.121), followed by variety *patens* (0.117). Peroxidase

enzyme which is known to be a defence induced enzyme (McInnis et al 2006, Cheong 2002, Delannoy 2003 and Do et al 2003). It is possible that pollen grains landing on stigma set in signals which activate peroxidase as a defence strategy. The activity of this enzyme is modified by germinating pollen grains (Bredemeijer 1984). Activities of acid phosphatase showed a considerable variation between self and cross-pollinated combinations. Activity was significantly higher (1.1894) in the styles after cross-pollination when compared with the self and unpollinated stigmas. The highest enzyme activity was noticed in the variety *patens* (1.0634) than variety *glabra* (0.0322). The elevated levels of acid phosphatase in cross-pollinated stigma clearly indicate a role for this enzyme in pollen tube growth in the style. This enzyme is probably produced in response to the penetrating pollen tube for providing inorganic phosphates through hydrolysis of phosphate esters (Ching 1987). Activity of polyphenol oxidase is very low or negligible in stigmas after self-pollination and stigma before anthesis. In contrast, the crossed stigma showed increase in polyphenol oxidase activity over the selfed styles. The highest specific activity for this enzyme was recorded in the cross-pollinated samples of stigma (0.1882) and the highest enzyme activity was noticed in the self-pollinated style of variety *patens* (0.1358) than variety *glabra* (0.1122). The consistently enhanced activity of polyphenol oxidase in the two plants is in line with its possible role in the defence mechanism (Mayer & Harel 1979, Bashan 1987 and Tyagi 2000). In wet and dry stigmas of a wide range of plants the time of stigma receptivity has been correlated with esterase activity (Heslop-Harrison 1975, Heslop-Harrison 1977, Kohn & Waser 1985 and Lavithis & Bhalla 1995). A moderate level of esterase activity is maintained at all the stages of stigma. Esterase activity was higher in cross-pollinated style (0.1848) than other stages of stigma. Also it is noticed that esterase activity was very low in stigmas of two varieties. Higher activity of esterase probably could be a response to the germinating pollen and must be facilitating in the penetration of the pollen tube into the stigma by hydrolyzing the cutin layer (Heslop-Harrison 1975, Lavithis & Bhalla 1995 and Hiscock et al 2002). Estimation of total protein was found to be higher in all the stages but cross-pollinated styles shows higher amount (5.6471) than other stages of stigma.

Conclusion:-

The enzyme may directly act to prevent the growth of selfed pollen tubes or sometimes may remain absent to disturb the growth of the pollen tube (Nettancourt 1977). Higher level of peroxidase found in cross-pollinated styles than in self-pollinated ones indicates its involvement in the regulation of pollen tube growth through styles. One cannot rule out the involvement of peroxidase, as a nonspecific factor of the self-incompatibility reaction, but it plays a significant part in this mechanism. There are reports that this enzyme brings about changes in structural glycoproteins, other enzymes, pectin or cellulose present in the pollen tube wall (Siegel & Galston 1955 and Stonier 1979). Higher level of acid phosphatase in self- than cross-pollination as observed in the present study is in agreement with the earlier finding of Dhaliwal and Malik (1985) in stigma-style tissues of *Brassica campestris* var. *Toria*. It can be inferred that the inhibition of pollen tube growth is due to some factor(s) that could cause the production of acid phosphatase in higher quantity. This enzyme is probably produced in response to the penetrating pollen tube for providing inorganic phosphates through hydrolysis of phosphate esters.

Elevated level of polyphenol oxidase in all the experimental samples following cross-pollination supports the complementary hypothesis and the earlier assumption of Mayer and Harel (1979) that the enzyme has the ability to produce quinone and selectively inhibit the activities of some other enzymes. Though the results of the present study do not confirm any direct relationship between this enzyme and the manifestation of self-incompatibility, it is possible that polyphenol oxidase acts as complementary factor along with other elements like environment and genetic makeup of the plant. In wet and dry stigmas of a wide range of plants the time of receptivity has been correlated with esterase activity. A moderate level of esterase activity is maintained at all the stages, to maintain the receptivity of stigma. The elevated amount of esterase in cross-pollinated stigma could be facilitating in the penetration of the pollen tube into the stigma by hydrolysing the cutin layer. Self-incompatibility mechanism in angiosperms is widespread and has received considerable attention in recent years. Self-incompatibility genes have been identified, characterized, cloned and transferred to self-compatible lines in several species (Hoopen 1998 and Brien 2002). From the present study, it may be concluded that significant changes in the activities of certain key enzymes occur in the stigma and style tissues of *Hamelia patens* following compatible and incompatible pollination. Variations in the enzyme activities as observed in the present study shows that the biochemical changes occur in the stigma style tissues affected by self-incompatibility mechanism that in turn affects the metabolic status of these tissues. As the synthesis of these enzymes is controlled by their corresponding gene(s), their quantitative changes may be due to the changes in the regulation of expression of gene(s) and hence offer a basis to study the mechanism of self-incompatibility at molecular level.

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Fig. 1:-*Hamelia patens* var. *patens*.



Fig. 2:-*Hamelia patens* var. *glabra*

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