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EVALUATION OF LEAF BIOMASS PRODUCTION AND FIBRE PROPERTIES OF *PANDANUS TECTORIUS* IN THE COASTAL PLAINS OF THRISSUR DISTRICT, KERALA, INDIA

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ABSTRACT: *Pandanus tectorius* or screw pine is one of the least exploited dominant plant species among the coastal vegetation of India. It forms thickets along seashore, bank of rivers, ponds, canals etc. Due to fibrous nature of the leaves it has been used in weaving industry. The leaf biomass and fibre morphology of *Pandanus tectorius* in three different coastal areas of Thrissur district of Kerala were studied. The total leaf dry weight per plant of *P. tectorius* ranged from 91.05 to 1610.23g in different sites. The number of leaves per plant ranged from 18 to 105. The biomass production varied with site and Kaipamangalam site showed the highest leaf biomass. The fibre length of the samples ranged from 1238.9 to 2285.7 μ m, fibre width from 9.683 to 16.145 μ m and fibre wall thickness from 1.847 to 4.045 μ m. While comparing the three sites, the high quality weaving material as indicated by fibre properties was highest in plants from Kodungallur.

Keywords: *Pandanus tectorius*, Biomass production, Fibre morphology, leaves.

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