

A new species of *Malaxis Solander ex Swartz* (Orchidaceae) from Dolpa, Nepal

Mani R. Shrestha¹, Lokesh R. Shakya² and Suresh K. Ghimire³

¹Sustainable and Equitable Development Academy (SEDA), Kathmandu, Nepal.
E-mail: sh.mani@gmail.com

²Botany Department, Amrit Campus, Thamel, Kathmandu, Nepal.
E-mail: lokesh@ccsl.com.np

³Central Department of Botany, Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu, Nepal

Abstract

Malaxis dolpensis M.R. Shrestha, L.R. Shakya et S.K. Ghimire (Orchidaceae), a new species from Dolpo, Nepal is described and illustrated.

INTRODUCTION

The genus *Malaxis Solander ex Swartz* consists of about 300 species distributed throughout the world but more frequently in SE Asia and the adjacent islands (Pears & Cribb 2002). In Nepal it is reported to have 10 species of which *Malaxis tamurensis* is endemic (Hara *et al* 1978; Press *et al* 2000; Rajbhandari & Dahal 2004). During the floristic study of Dolpo (North Western Nepal) we collected a new species of *Malaxis* related to *Malaxis muscifera*. This new taxon is described and illustrated below.

***Malaxis dolpensis* M.R. Shrestha, L.R. Shakya et S.K. Ghimire Sp. Nov.** (Fig. 1).

Malaxis muscifera (Lindley) Kuntze affinis, sed differt habitus parvus, folia anguste oblongo-lanceolatus, labello simplex non lobus.

Type: Nepal, Karnali Zone, Dolpa District, Khorakchhang, alt. 4200m, July 2003, Mani R. Shrestha, Suresh K. Ghimire and Lanka Shahi 873 (Holo- KATH; Iso- TUCH).

Terrestrial 5.5 – 7 cm tall; tuber globose, 0.8 – 1 cm, plant arising from the lateral side of the tuber. Stem ca. 1 cm, leafy. Leaves 2, 1 – 2 x 1 cm, sessile, narrow oblong-lanceolate, acute. Inflorescence ca 4 – 5 cm long, racemose, densely 10 – 14 flowered; peduncle cylindrical, 3 – 5 cm long; rachis 1 – 1.5 cm long. Flowers bracteate, sessile, ca. 4 mm across. Bracts ca. 2.5 x 0.8 mm, longer than ovary, ovate. Dorsal sepal ca. 1.8 x 0.72 mm, ovate-lanceolate, acute, entire; lateral sepals ca. 1.8 x 0.5 mm, oblong, acute, entire. Petals ca. 1.8 x 0.2 mm, linear, obtuse. Lip ca. 1.8 x 0.7 mm, simple, without lobes, fleshy, ovate, 5-veined. Column ca. 0.4 mm long, cylindrical, clinandrium apical, clinandrial wing distinct; rostellum minute, triangular; pollinia 4, ca. 0.3 mm long, obovoid.

Habitat: Dry open meadows

Flowering: July

Distribution: Dolpa, Nepal; endemic

Etymology: The specific epithet of the new taxon is based on its type locality, Dolpa, Nepal.

Malaxis dolpensis is related to *M. muscifera* (Lindley) Kuntze from which it can be easily distinguished by its smaller size, leaves oblong-lanceolate against ovate-oblong, lip simple and unlobed against distinctly 3-lobed.

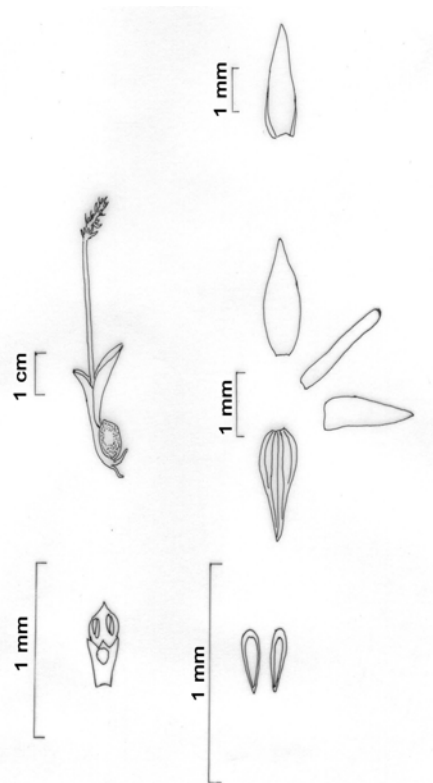


Fig. 1. *Malaxis dolpensis* M.R. Shrestha , L.R. Shakya et S.K. Ghimire
A. Habit; B. Bract; C. Sepals, petal & lip spread out; D. Column front view; E. Pollinia.

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