

***Didymoplexis pallens* Griffith (Orchidaceae): A new record for Nepal**

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Abstract

The occurrence of *Didymoplexis pallens* Griffith (Orchidaceae) in Nepal is reported. Detailed description, illustration and relevant notes are provided.

Key words: *Didymoplexis pallens*, New record, Nepal.

INTRODUCTION

The saprophytic genus *Didymoplexis* Griffith consists of ca. 20 species distributed throughout tropical Africa, Madagascar, SE Asia, Malaysia and adjacent Islands (Pearce and Cribb, 2002). *Didymoplexis pallens* Griff. is widely distributed species in Afghanistan, North East India, Thailand, Japan, Malaysia to the Philippines, New Guinea, Australia (Pearce & Cribb, 2002).

This genus has been so far not reported from the Nepal Himalaya (Hara *et. al.*, 1978; Banerji & Pradhan, 1984; Press *et. al.*, 2000; DPR, 2001; Rajbhandari & Dahal, 2004). There is no record of this specimen in the National Herbarium, Kathmandu (KATH). Recently this terrestrial saprophytic orchid was collected from the Baraul VDC-3 of Sunsari district, Eastern Nepal. In natural habitat, it is found underneath the bushes of *Shroea robusta* forest in flowering conditions. The species was growing on humus rich soil with newly decaying leaves with the poor light. The Population is scarce. On close examination the specimen turned out to be *Didymoplexis pallens*. The present record of this species is new to Nepal and moreover the genus *Didymoplexis* itself is new to this country. Thus, we report an addition of a new genus and a species to the orchid flora of Nepal.

Didymoplexis pallens Griffith in Calcutta J. Nat. Hist. 4:383, t.17 (1884); King & Pantling in Ann. Roy. Bot. Gard. Calcutta 8: 260, t. 346 (1898); Pearce & Cribb, Orch. Bhutan: 30 (2000). (Fig. 1)

Plant terrestrial, saprophytic, ca. 10cm tall; tuber fusiform, 4.5 × 0.5 cm. Stem erect, leafless, cylinder, glabrous, distantly two sheathed; sheath 3mm, acute, light brown, tubular. Inflorescence laxly 4-5 flowered; floral bracts minute. Flowers opening in succession, campanulate, bilabiate, 2cm long; uniformly white. Ovary brown; pedicel and ovary 1cm long. Lateral sepals connate, 2-lobed, lobes obtuse, 6 × 1.5mm; dorsal sepal adnate to petals forming a hood, free portion 3-lobed, each lobe ovate to deltoid. Lip deltoid, spreading, truncate in front, entire, base cuneate, 8.7 × 6mm; disc with numerous small papillae; column curved, apex two winged, 5mm long.

Flowering: April.

Altitude: 150m.

Specimen examined: Eastern Nepal, Koshi Zone, Sunsari district, Baraul VDC-3, April, SM-40 (KATH)

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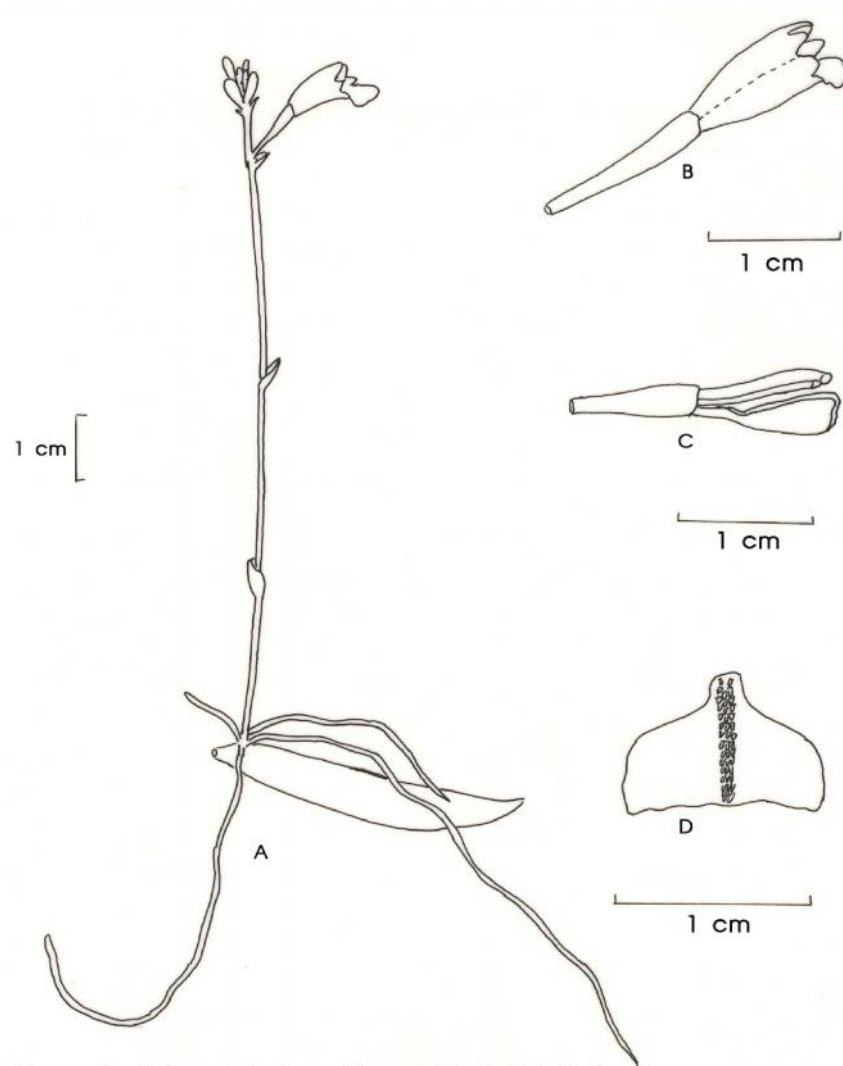


Figure 1. *Didymoplexis pallens* Griff.-A Habit; B. Flower
C. Ovary, column and lip; D. Lip

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