

***Oberonia longilabris* King & Pantling (Orchidaceae): A new record for Nepal**

Bhakta B. Raskoti¹ and Lokesh R. Shakya²

¹IUCN Nepal

²Department of Botany, Amrit Campus, Thamel, Kathmandu, Nepal

E-mail: nibeshshak@gmail.com

Abstract

Oberonia longilabris King & Pantling (Orchidaceae) in Nepal is reported. Detailed description, illustration and relevant notes are provided.

Key words: *Oberonia longilabris*, New record, Nepal.

INTRODUCTION

The genus *Oberonia* Lindley consists of about 350 species in the world and is distributed from East Africa via Midland Asia to Pacific. In the Himalayas the genus *Oberonia* is represented by 34 species (Shakya 1999). In Nepal the genus is represented by 17 species (Hara *et al.* 1978; Banerji & Pradhan 1984; Coba *et al.* 1994; Press *et al.* 2000; Shakya *et al.* 2002).

King and Pantling (1898) established *Oberonia longilabris* as distinct taxon. Seidenfaden (1968) and Ansari & Balakrishnan (1990) treated this species as synonym of *Oberonia caulescens* Lindley. The second author while revising *Oberonia* of the Himalayas (Shakya 1999) the type specimen (Pantling 227, CAL) and other specimens labeled as *Oberonia longilabris* deposited at ASSAM were critically studied and compared with its allied species *Oberonia caulescens* and found that *Oberonia longilabris* exists as distinct taxon.

The gross morphological characters of *Oberonia longilabris* are similar to *Oberonia caulescens*, but it can readily be distinguished from the latter in habit, lip and column characters (Table- 1).

Table 1. Distinguishing characters of *Oberonia longilabris* and *Oberonia caulescens*

| Characters | <i>Oberonia longilabris</i> | <i>Oberonia caulescens</i> |
|-------------------|--|---|
| Habit | Acaulescent or subcaulescent | Caulесcent |
| Lip | Veinless Lateral lobes orbicular, distinct | Faintly 3-veined Lateral lobes orbicular, smaller than in <i>Oberonia longilabris</i> |
| Column | Lobules of the terminal lobe acuminate Laterally winged | Lobules of the terminal lobe acute Wingless |

Recently a species of *Oberonia* was collected from Satyawati VDC, Ward No. 3, Palpa District, Lumbini zone, Western Nepal, at an altitude of 600 m. On critical study it was identified as *Oberonia longilabris*. The present report is, therefore, a new record of this species for Nepal and hence an addition to the country's rich orchid flora. This study also focuses on reinstatement of *Oberonia longilabris* as a distinct taxon.

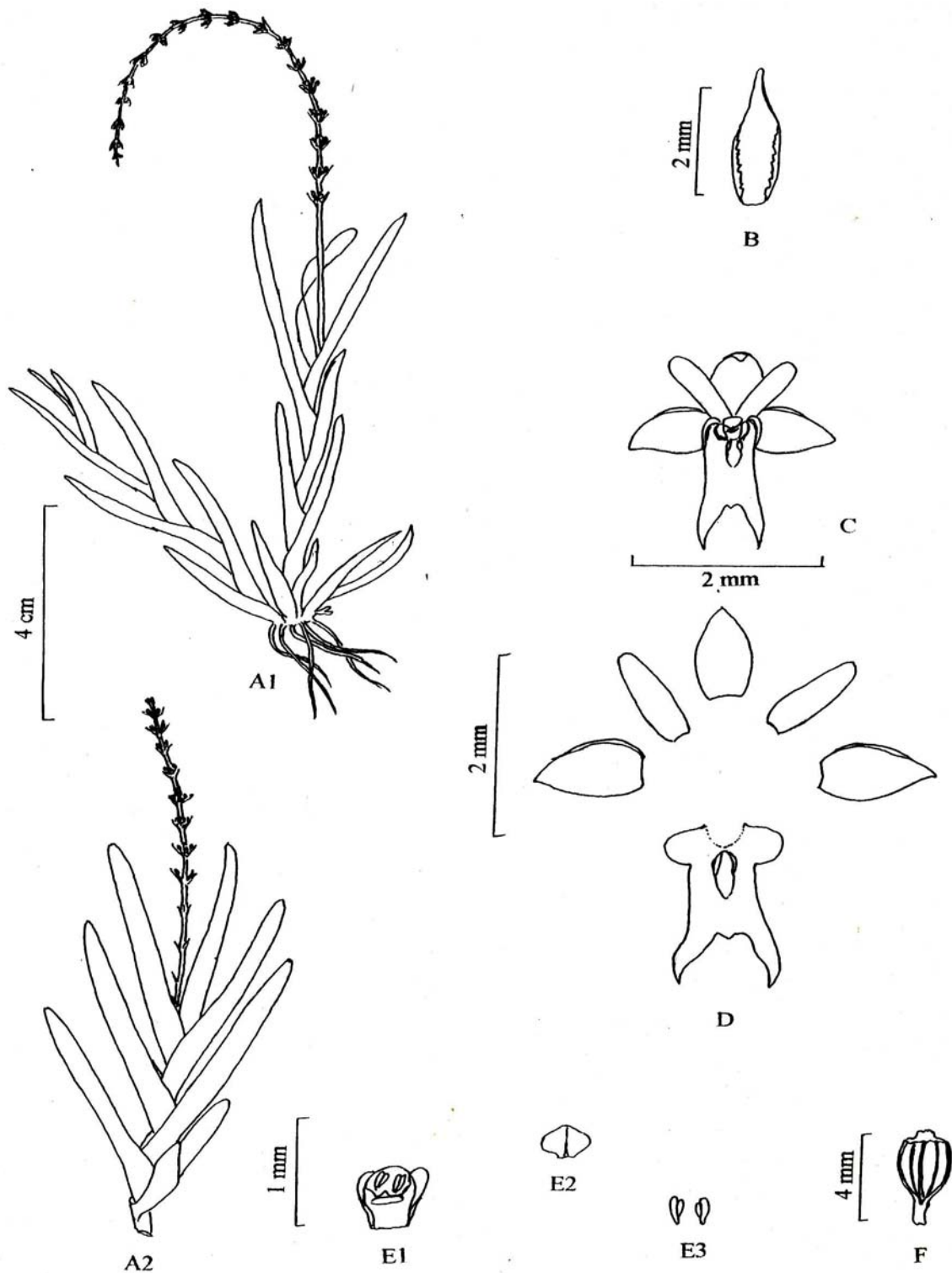


Fig. 1. *Oberonia longilabris* King & Pantling. A1 habit, A2 habit; B bract; C flower; D outer three sepals, inner two petals and the lip spread out; E1 column, E2 operculum, E3 pollinia; F fruit.

Oberonia longilabris King & Pantling in J. As. Soc. Bengal 64: 330. (1895); Ann. Roy. Bot. Gard. Calcutta 8: 13, pl. 13A [Fig. 1]

Plants 5 – 8 cm long, 2.5 – 3.5 cm broad, caespitose, acaulescent or subcaulescent. **Leaves** 4 – 7, ca. 2.5 – 4.5 x 0.25 – 0.5 cm, distichous, equitant, linear, acute, subfalcate, fleshy. **Inflorescence** longer than longest leaf; *scapes* ca. 6.5 – 7.5 cm long, slender, ribbed bracteate; *Spikes* ca. 3.5-5cm long, flower verticels ca. 4 mm apart. **Flowers** ca. 2 mm across, bracteate, subsessile, yellow. **Bracts** ca. 2 x 0.6 mm, slightly exceeding the subsessile ovary, oblong-lanceolate, acute, slightly erose. **Sepals** similar, ca. 1 x 0.5 mm, ovate, acute, entire. **Petals** ca. 1 x 0.3 mm, oblong, obtuse, entire. **Lips** ca. 1.7 x 0.8 mm long, 3-lobed, lateral lobes small, distinct, orbicular, bent upward, entire; mesochile with a small elongated cavity near the column; terminal lobe deeply cleft into two lobules; lobules subtriangular, acuminate, entire, diverging, sinus broad with small subtriangular protuberance. **Columns** ca. 0.4 mm long, cylindrical, laterally winged. **Fruits** 0.5 cm long, clavate, pediceled, ribbed.

Type: India, Sikkim, Namgah, *Pantling 227* (Holotypus- CAL!)

Specimen cited: West Nepal, Lumbini zone, Palpa District, Satyawati VDC, Ward No. 3, 600 m, August 2008, *Raskoti 147* (TUCH)

Flowering: August

Altitude: 600 – 1200 m

Distribution: India (Sikkim, Meghalaya, Nagaland), Nepal

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