

***Bulbophyllum sikkimense* (King & Pantling) J.J. Smith (Orchidaceae) – a new record for the orchid flora of Assam, India**

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Abstract

The species *Bulbophyllum sikkimense* (King & Pantling) J.J. Smith (Orchidaceae) is collected from the tropical rain forests of Sibsagar and Dibrugarh districts of upper Assam, India, for the first time and reported as new distributional record for Assam in the Northeastern part of India. The species is enumerated in the paper with description and distribution.

Key words: Rainforest, *Bulbophyllum*, New record, Assam,

INTRODUCTION

During the present investigation of orchid diversity of tropical rainforests of Assam, a state in the Northeastern of India, an interesting species of *Bulbophyllum* Thouras was collected from Abhoipur Reserve Forest of Sivasagar district. The species was further located at Dihing Patkai Wildlife sanctuary of Dibrugarh district. On critical examination it was identified as *Bulbophyllum sikkimense* (King & Pantling) J.J. Smith. On going through the literature on the orchids of this region (Chowdhery 2009; Bhagawati *et al* 2006; Baruah 2001; Gogoi *et al* 2009; Borah *et al* 2010) reveals that it was earlier not recorded from Assam and hence here it has been reported as new distributional record for Assam. The species is widely distributed in the area which chiefly grows on tree trunks of the species like *Dipterocarpus macrocarpus* Vesque, *Alstonia scholaris* (Linnaeus) R. Brown, *Sapium baccatum* Roxburgh, *Artocarpus* spp., *Mesua ferrea* Linnaeus, *Lagerstroemia reginae* Roxburgh, etc. The species is presently growing in the net house of the Department of Botany, Sibsagar College.

The genus *Bulbophyllum* Thouras is one of the larger genera of Orchidaceae which is represented by 1000 to 1200 species distributed in the tropical and sub-tropical regions of the world (Mabberley 2005; Jalal *et al* 2010). It is widely distributed in India with ca 100 species (Chowdhery 1998) out of which 85 species is found in N.E. India and 19 species in Assam (Chowdhery 2009).

Bulbophyllum sikkimense (King & Pantling) J.J. Smith was earlier reported from the foothills of Sikkim (King & Pantling 1898; Pradhan 1979; Pearce & Cribb 2002) at an elevation of 300 m amsl. The species was then reported from the West Kameng District of Arunachal Pradesh (Chowdhery 2009) at the altitude of 200 – 1000 m. So far the species was not known to grow in Assam. However, presently the species has been collected from the tropical rainforest ecosystem in Sivasagar and Dibrugarh districts of Assam at the elevation of 183 – 210 m. The present record is the first report of distribution of *Bulbophyllum sikkimense* to Assam State to the southern bank of river Brahmaputra.

The species is presented below along with its nomenclature, habitat, brief description, phenology and distribution. Color photographs (Fig. 1) and an illustration (Fig. 2) is also provided.

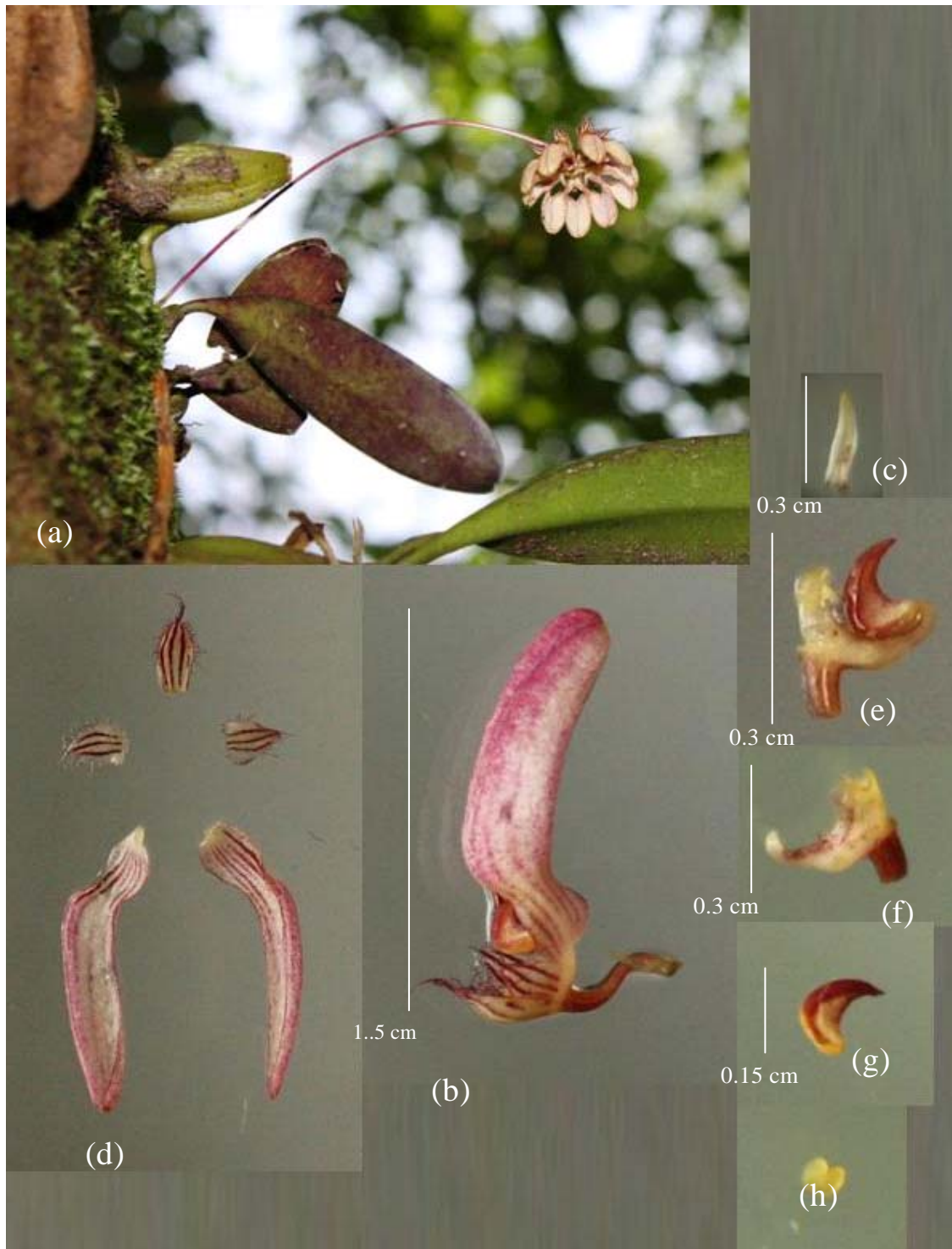


Fig. 1. *Bulbophyllum sikkimense*: (a) Habit of the species, (b) complete flower, (c) floral bract, (d) sepals & petals in arrangement, (e) lip & column, (f) column, (g) lip, (h) pollinia.

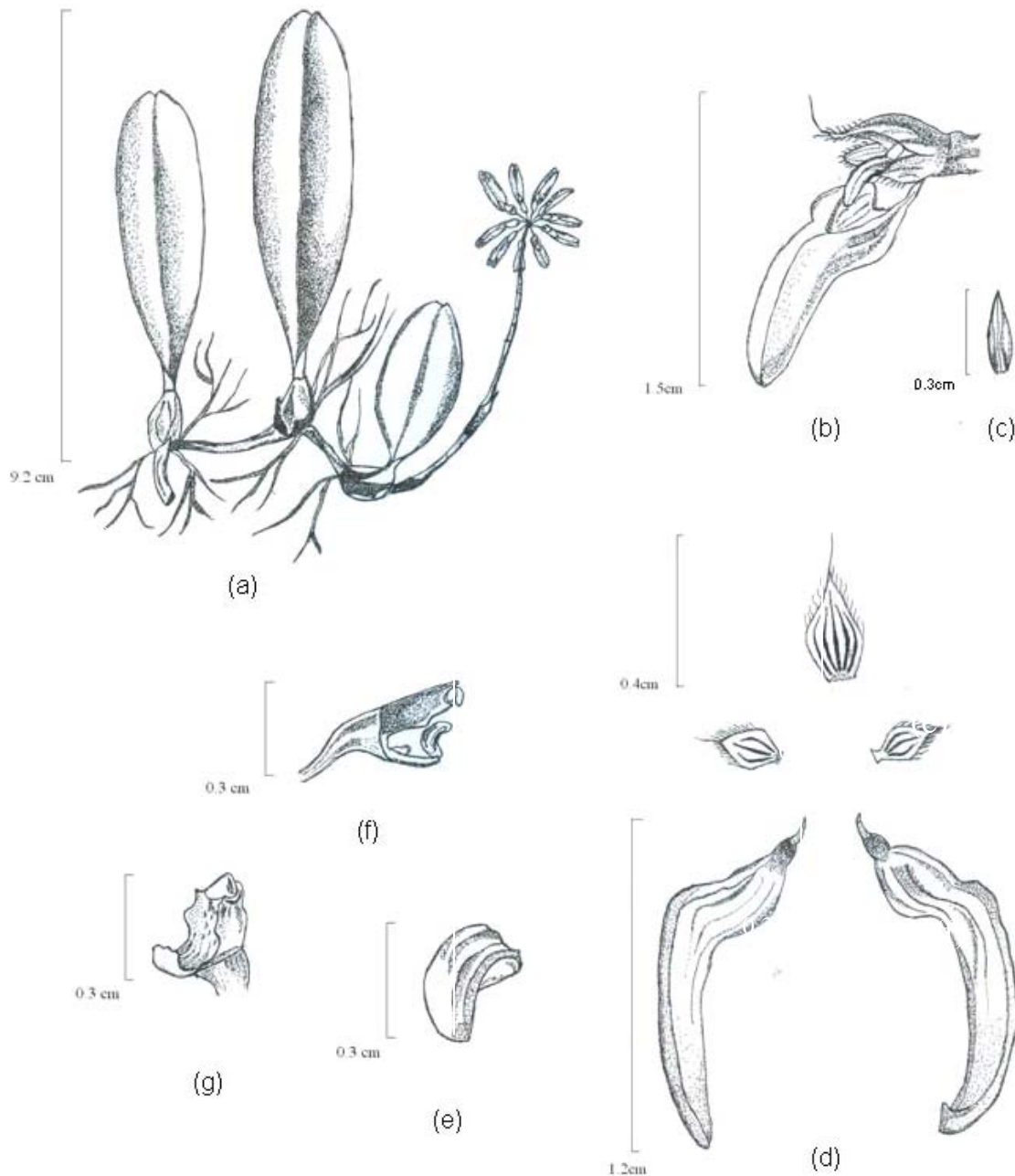


Fig. 2. (a) Habit sketch; (b) complete flower; (c) floral bract; (d) sepals and petals; (e) lip; (f) column, ovary and lip; (g) column.

Bulbophyllum sikkimense (King & Pantling) J.J Smith in Bull. Jard. Bot. Buitenz. Ser. 2, 8: 28. 1912; Hajra & Verma, Fl. Sikkim 1: 39. 1996. *Cirrhopetalum sikkimense* King & Pantling in Ann. Roy. Bot. Gard. Calcutta 8: 90, t. 125. 1898; *Cirrhopetalum roxburghii* Lindley, *Cirrhopetalum roxburghii* Lindley, Gen. Sp. Orch. Pl. 58. 1830; Fl. Brit. Ind. 5: 774. 1890; *Bulbophyllum roxburghii* (Lindley) Reichenbach f., Ann. Bot. Syst. 6: 263. 1861; Cribb & Pears, Fl. Bhutan 3(3): 469. 2002. *Aerides radiatum* Roxburgh, Fl. Ind. 3: 476. 1832; *Phyllorchis roxburghii* (Lindley) Kuntze, Revis. Gen. Pl. 2: 677. 1891.

Small epiphyte; rhizome naked, ca 2 cm long. Pseudobulb, ovoid globose, ca 0.9 to 1.5 cm long; leaves fleshy, 7–8.5 x 1.5–2 cm, oblanceolate, obtuse, notched at tip. Scape ca 6 cm long arising from the base of pseudobulbs with nodes and internodes. Internodes 0.5 cm long; flowers 7 – 12 radiated in umbellate inflorescence, 1.5 cm long, purplish; floral bracts 0.3 cm long, lanceolate, acuminate, 1-nerved; dorsal sepals 0.2 cm long, concave, acute, the tip upturned with soft hairs on its edge, nerve brownish-red; lateral sepals blunt with hairs on edge; petals 1.5 cm long, margin purplish, nerves many, brown, entire; lip edge entire, concave, having a slender raised line down its center; shoulders of column bidentated, white with pink patches, marked with elongated brown dots; pollinia 2, small, yellow.

Flowering: April to July

Exsiccatae: Abhoypur, *PC Nath, SC BOT 0079*; Jeypore, *PC Nath, SC BOT 0110* dated 14.05.2010

Note. King & Pantling (1898) had described two bracts in their specimen, however we noted only one bract in it.

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