

***Coelogyne flavida* Wallich ex Lindley (Orchidaceae) – a new record for the orchid flora of Assam, India**

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Abstract

Coelogyne flavida Wallich ex Hooker f. was collected for the first time from Jeypore Reserve Forest in Dibrugarh district of upper Assam, India and is reported here as a new distributional record for Assam. The species is enumerated in the paper along with brief description and distribution in India.

Keywords: New record, *Coelogyne*, distribution, rainforest, Assam.

INTRODUCTION

The Northeast India is the phytogeographical 'gateway' for much of the Indian flora as a result of which the region is one of the richest in biological values. The vegetation types of the region ranges from Tropical forest to Alpine meadows. The undulated physiography, heavy rainfall, high relative humidity in atmosphere, maximum forest cover with diverse vegetation supports the luxurious growth of orchid species (Rao 2006).

During recent field surveys in the tropical rain forest of upper Assam several orchid species are collected and identified out of which an interesting species of *Coelogyne* was collected from the Jeypore Reserve Forest (JRF) of Dibrugarh district. On reviewing through the literature and floras (King & Pantling 1898; Chowdhery 1998) it was identified as *Coelogyne flavida* Wallich ex Hooker f. which was earlier not reported from the state of Assam (Rao 2007; Bhagabati *et al* 2006; Barua 2001; Chowdhery 2009; Gogoi *et al* 2009; Kumar & Manilal 1994). Voucher specimen is deposited in the Herbarium of the Botany Department, Gauhati University.

The genus *Coelogyne* was described by John Lindley in 1821. The generic name is derived from the Greek word 'koilos' (hollow) and 'gynae' (female) in allusion to the shape of the stigma. *Coelogyne* is the largest genus of Asiatic orchids widely distributed from India and Sri Lanka across Southern Asia and the Malayan Archipelago to the Philippines, New Guinea and South West Pacific Islands. It is widely distributed in India with about 100 spp (Chowdhery 1998) out of which 11 species occurs in Assam (Bhagabati *et al* 2006).

Coelogyne flavida Wallich ex Hooker f. was earlier reported from Sikkim Himalaya, Khasi Hills and Naga Hills (King & Pantling 1898) and from Arunachal Pradesh from an



PLATE I: *Coelogyne flavida* Wallich & Lindley: A. A clump with inflorescence; B. Enlarged view of the inflorescence

elevation of about 1500 m (Chowdhery 1998). The species has also been reported from Thailand (Seidenfaden & Smitinand 1959). Presently the species has been collected from the tropical rainforest ecosystem at JRF from an altitude of about 120 m. The present paper is the first distributional report of *Coelogyne flavida* Wallich *ex* Lindley in the state of Assam.

The species is presented below along with its nomenclature, habitat, brief description, phenology and distribution.

Coelogyne flavida Wallich *ex* Lindley, Fol. Orchid. 10. 1854; Hooker *f.*, Fl. Brit. India, 5: 839. 1890; King & Pant. in Ann. Roy. Bot. Gard. Calcutta 8: 138, 1898; Chowdhery, Orchid Fl. Arun. Prad., 219. 1998. [PLATE – I & II]

Epiphytic herb, 20 - 30cm long, pseudobulbs 1cm thick, 1.5 - 3cm apart on creeping rhizome, conical, shrunken when flowering; sheathed at base, 3.5 cm in length, arising from scaly rhizome. Leaves 2, acute, elliptic oblong, enclosed at the base, 14-15.5cm x 1.7-1.9 cm. Scapes terminal, zig-zag with many small imbricated scaly sheaths just below the flowers. Racemes arising from between the leaves, ca 9 cm long, 5-7 flowered, greenish yellow,

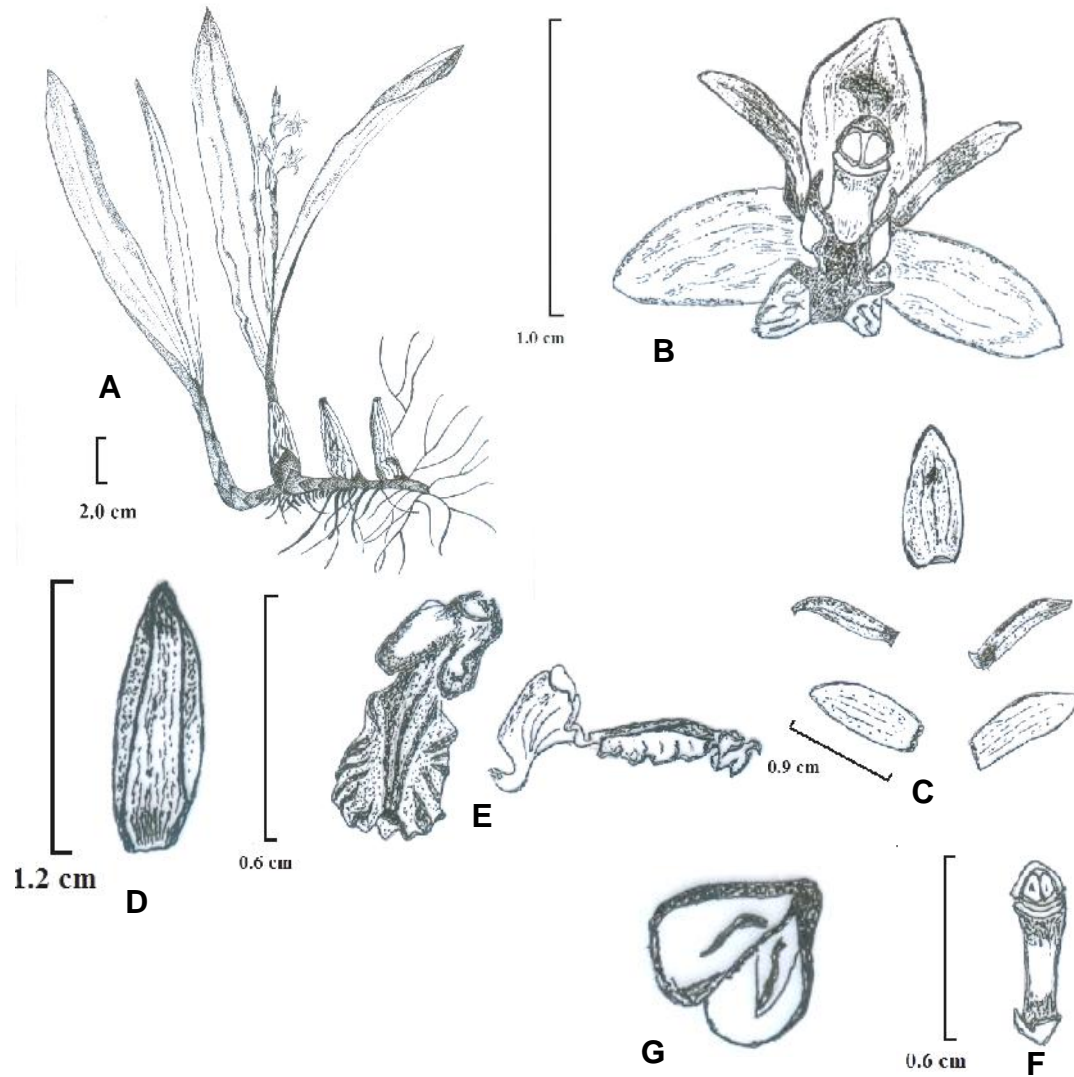


PLATE II. *Coelogyne flavida* Wallich *ex* Lindley: **A.** Habit sketch; **B.** Complete flower; **C.** Arrangement of floral parts; **D.** Floral Bract; **E.** Lip – front and side view; **F.** Column; **G.** Pollinia

flowers ca 1cm across; floral bract 1.2 cm long, broadly ovate, acute, sepals ca 0.9 cm long, acuminate, spreading; petals 0.7 cm long, linear; lip 0.6 cm long, 3 lobed, basal portion concave; lateral lobes obtuse, oblong, terminal lobe decurved, undulated, separated from the lateral lobes by two broad sinuses, disc faintly ridges; column about 0.6 cm long, straight; pollinia 4 in 2 groups.

Flowering: May to June

Exsiccatae: Jeypore, *Nath & Das, SCBOT 064*

Indian Distribution: Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Meghalaya in India and Thailand.

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