

***Blumea eriantha* A.P. de Candolle (Asteraceae) – a new record for North-East India from Assam**

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Abstract

Blumea eriantha A.P. de Candolle (Asteraceae) is a newly recorded species from Assam for the flora of North-East India. It is already reported from other parts of India except North East India. In this paper morphological characterization and phenology with putative details of the species has been discussed.

Key words: New species; *Blumea eriantha*, Asteraceae, Assam.

INTRODUCTION

A.P. de Candolle first described the genus *Blumea* in 1836. The genus belongs to the tribe Inuleae and sub-tribe Pluchenieae of Asteraceae (Hajra *et al.* 1995). Tailed anthers, flattened style branches, marginal stigmatic lines and capillary pappus are distinguishing characters of the tribe Inuleae. Hooker (1882) divided the genus *Blumea* A.P. de Candolle into six sections without assigning any sectional names. The genus was informally included under *Plucheeae* group, but following De Candolle's circumscription, Anderberg (1991) treated *Blumea* A.P. de Candolle as an important taxon at higher levels in the *Inuleae* for its shape of sweeping hairs on the style and presence of a single oxalate crystal in epidermal cells of the cypsela.

Online herbarium sheets [www.plantlist.org, version 1.1] and specimens at CAL were consulted for Identification of the plant. Literature consultation including Kanjilal *et al.* (1939), Deb (1983), Hajra *et al.* (1995), Choudhury (2005), Barua & Nath (1998) and herbarium specimens, it has been observed that *Blumea eriantha* A.P. de Candolle is not so far reported from North-Eastern part of India. *Blumea* A.P. de Candolle represented by 36 species in *Flora of British India* (Hooker 1882), 9 species in *Flora of Assam* (Kanjilal *et al.* 1939), 13 species in *Assam's Flora* (Choudhury, 2005), 5 species in *Flora of Nongpoh and its vicinity* (Joseph 1968) and 2 species in *Cherapunji Sub-division, East Khashi Hills, Meghalaya* (Dam 1994).

TAXONOMIC TREATMENT

Blumea eriantha A.P. de Candolle in Wight, Contrib. Bot. Ind. 15. 1834; Hooker *f.* in Fl. Brit. India 3: 266. 1881; Rao in Hajra *et al.*, Fl. India 13: 122 – 124. 1995.

Erect perennial herbs, 30 – 85 cm high; stems reddish-yellow, branched, covered with silky white hairs. Lower leaves obovate, 2 – 12 x 0.5 – 5 cm, spinulose-serrate, obtuse-apiculate, base tapering, pilose, subsessile; upper leaves elliptic ovate to oblanceolate, clasping at the

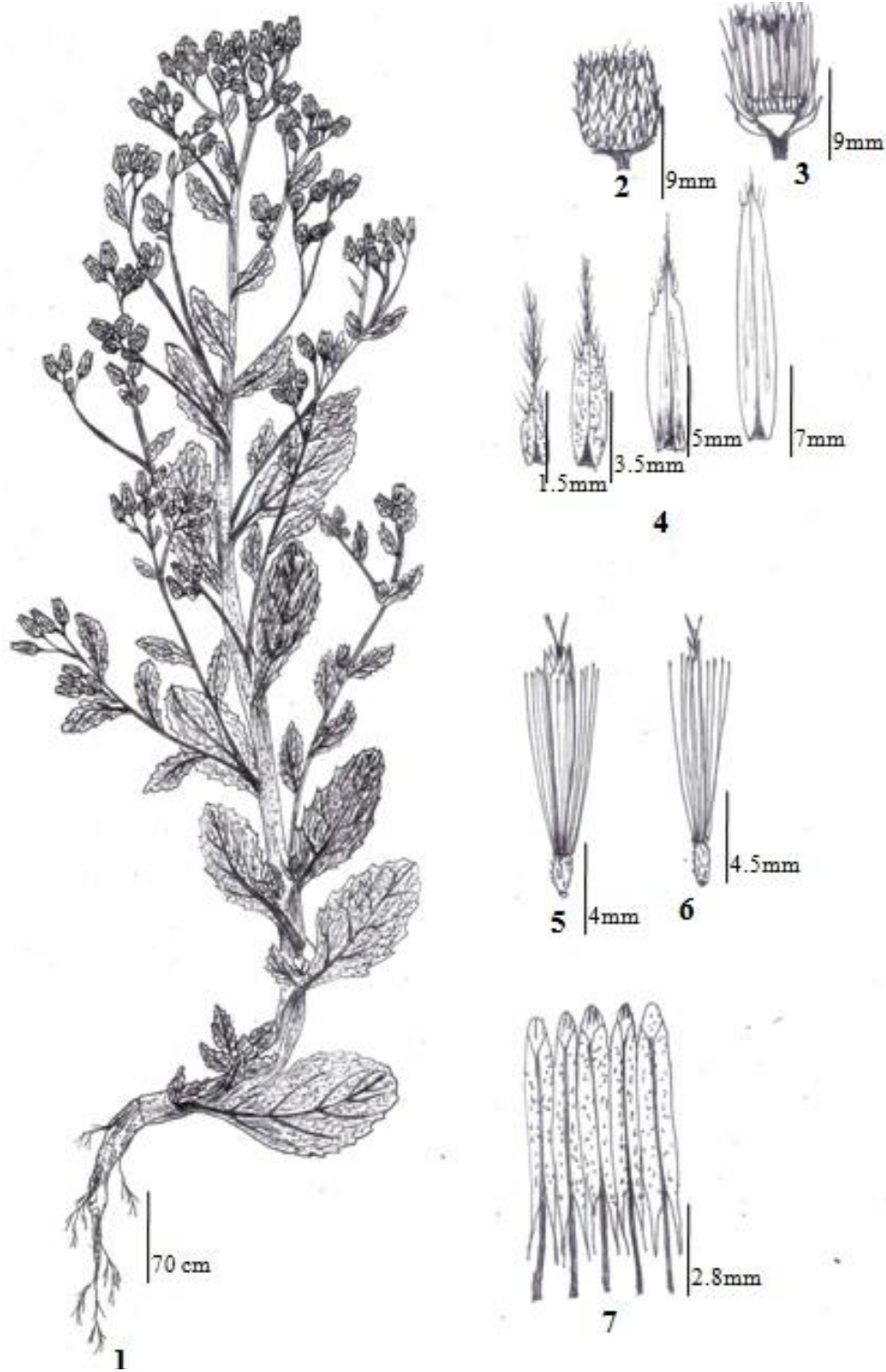


PLATE - I: *Blumea eriantha* A.P. de Candolle: 1. Habit; 2. Capitulum; 3. Longitudinal section of capitulum; 4. Bracts; 5. Tubular florets; 6. Filiform florets; 7. Stamens

base, spinulose-serrate, densely pilose on both surface, sessile. Heads terminal or axillary, solitary or few, clustered, 5 – 6 x 9 mm. Involucral bracts tetra-seriate; inner bracts linear, acute, 6.5 – 7.5 mm long, slightly longer than florets, pubescent; outer bracts small, lanceo-ovate, hairs on dorsal surface, margins scarious, ciliate, 1.5-2 mm long. Florets numerous; marginal filiform, pistilate florets 3.5 – 4.5 mm long, 3-lobed, pubescent; central florets tubular, bisexual, 3 – 4 mm long, 5-lobbed, lobes yellow, pubescent, tube white. Achenes brown, ribbed, pubescent, 18 – 2 x 0.2 – 0.3 mm; pappus white, 3- 3.5 mm long.

Flowering & Fruiting: November – April.

Specimens Examined: Singbhum, 21.01.1903, *H.H. Haines* 0601; Dindari, Keanchi, Madhya Pradesh 21.12.1962, G. Panigrahi 6263; Warangal District, Andhra Pradesh, 26.2.1963, *Henry, A. N.* 15938 (CAL); Nalbari, Assam, *Santa Paul* 0077, dated 24.02.2012.

Distribution: Endemic to India [<http://www.gbif.org/species/5395738/distributions>]: Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Maharashtra and Goa, Assam: Kokrajhar, Bongaigaon, Barpeta, Nalbari, Goalpara, Kamrup, Naogaon, North Cachar Hills, Udalguri.

Association: In open forest, road sides and fields. Associated with *Ageratum conyzoides* Linnaeus, *Alternanthera sessilis* (Linnaeus) R. Brown ex A.P. de Candolle, *Amaranthus viridis* Linnaeus, *Centella asiatica* (Linnaeus) Urban, *Leucas aspera* (Willdenow) Link, *Lindernia crustacea* (Linnaeus) F. Mueller, *Parthenium hysterophorus* Linnaeus and also with some grasses.

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