NOTE

Rediscovery of *Ardisia keenanii* C.B. Clarke (Myrsinaceae) from Assam, India

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ABSTRACT: The paper deals with the rediscovery of *Ardisia keenanii* C.B. Clarke an interesting endemic and threatened taxon. It is rediscovered from Assam, India after a gap of about 138 years. A detailed taxonomic account of the species has been provided to facilitate its easy identification.

KEY WORDS: *Ardisia keenanii*, Assam, Critically Endangered, rediscovery.

INTRODUCTION

Ardisia keenanii C.B. Clarke was described by Clarke (1882) on the basis of collection made by him from Manipur on May 17, 1868 and by R. L. Keenan from Gopal Tilla Tea Estate in Cachar district of Assam on June 11, 1873, along with a short diagnosis of the plant. This species could never be collected again since its original collections, neither from its type locality nor elsewhere. Kanjilal *et al.* (1939) recorded the plant in Flora of Assam based on Clark's report only.

Recently during an exploration near Kalaincherra, Borail Wild Life Sanctuary in Cachar district of Assam on May 09, 2011, the first author has encountered with very few mature individuals of *Ardisia sp*. Subsequent critical study and verification with the photograph of authentic specimens deposited at Royal Botanic Garden, Kew [available at http://apps.kew.org/herbcat/navigator.do], revealed the identity of the plant as *Ardisia keenanii* – an endemic species confined to Assam and Manipur state after a gap of about 138 years. However the existence of the above species in second state is uncertain. The herbarium specimen of the species preserved at ASSAM Herbarium, Botanical Survey of India, ERC, Shillong, Meghalaya.

TAXONOMIC TREATMENT

Ardisia keenanii C.B. Clarke in Hook.f., Fl. Brit. India 3: 526. 1882; Kanjilal *et al*. Fl. Assam 3: 536. 1939. Fig. 1

Shrub up to 1.5 m high; branches densely rusty-villous round. Petiole 0.5 – 0.7 cm long, pubescent; leaf blade oblong 10-18 × 2.8-5.0 cm, glabrous above rusty villous beneath, narrowed at both ends, lateral nerves 12 – 15 on either half of the mid-vein, nerves prominent beneath, margin slightly dentate or wavy, apex acute. Inflorescence in lax pedunculate elongated racemes. Peduncle 2.5 – 5.0 cm pubescent, on one branchlet divaricate from near its apex, on the other ascending from a lower axil. Flowers 1.3 – 1.4 cm in diam., bud ca. 0.8 × 0.4 cm, pedicels 1.8 – 2.5 cm, pubescent. Sepals 5, contorted, orbicular, 1.8 – 2 mm, glabrous, green. Petals 5, pink, connate at base ovate, 7 – 8 × 3 – 3.2 mm, apex acute. Stamens subequalling petals; filaments ca. 1/5 anther length; anthers oblong-lanceolate, glabrous, apex acute. Carpel ca. 7 – 8 mm, green, ovary glabrous, ovoid, ca. 1.8 × 1.5 mm, style filiform 5.5 – 6.0 mm. Fruits not seen.

Flowering and Fruiting: April – September.

Specimen examined: Terrestrial, growing in association with *Euonymus glaber* Roxb., *Mikania scandens* Willd. etc., Assam, Cachar: Borail Wild Life Sanctuary, near Kalaincherra area, (25º01'11.36"N and 92º30' 17.75"E, altitude *ca*. 77 m), 9 Apr. 2011, *H. A. Barbhuiya* 653 (ASSAM); Cachar, Gopal Tilla T.E., 11 June 1873, *R. L. Keenan s.n.* (K). Manipur, 17 May 1868, *C. B. Clarke* 7065 (K).

Distribution: INDIA: Assam (Cachar), Manipur. Endemic.

Conservation status: Severely fragmented population, area of occupancy is estimated to be less than 10 km^2, while the population size estimated to number fewer than 40 mature individuals. Following the IUCN Red List Categories and Criteria (IUCN 2001), this species may be classified as Critically Endangered (CR), based on the criteria B2a and D, while there is degradation of the habitat (B2b(iii)) due to slash-and-burn cultivation.

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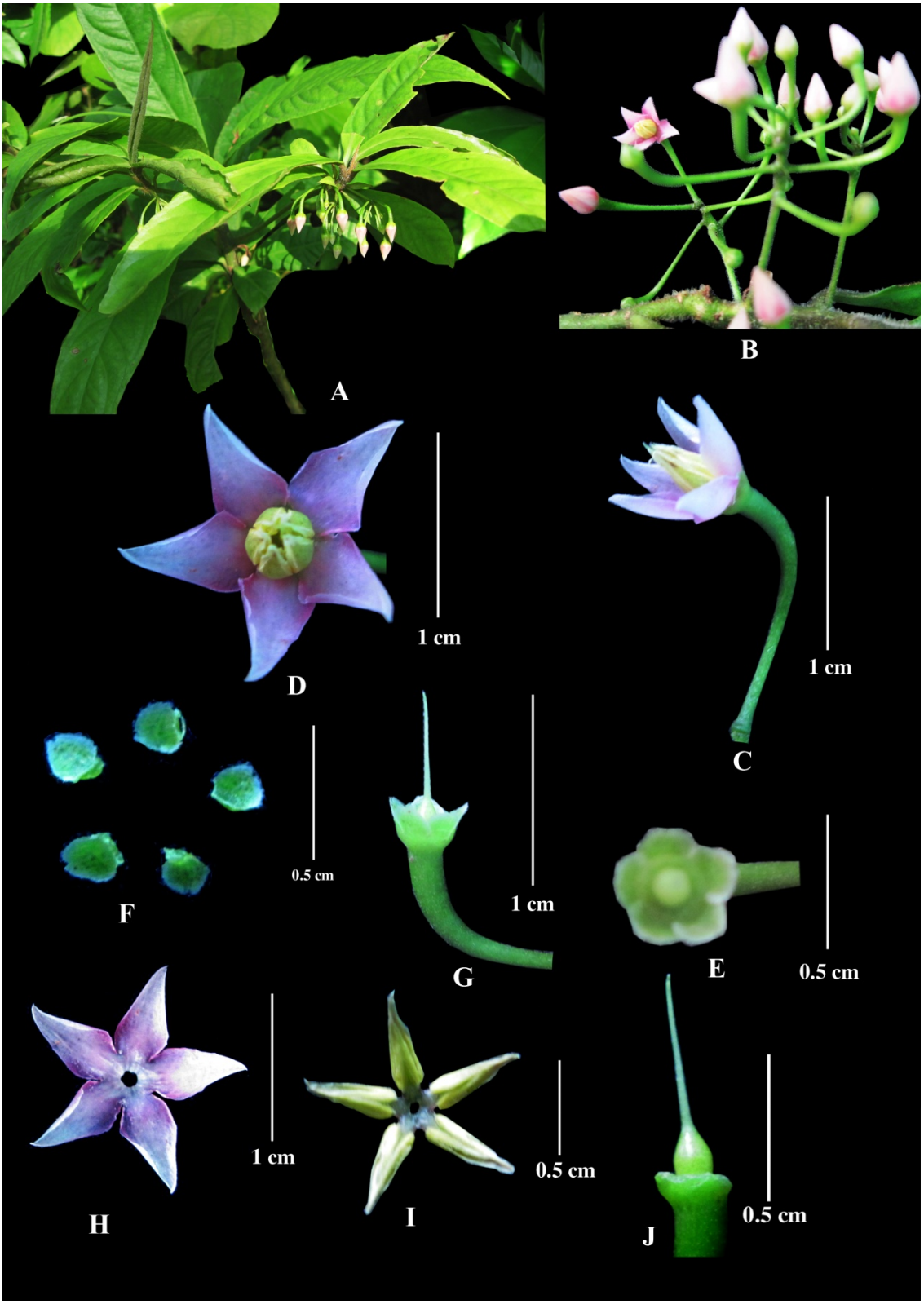


Fig. 1. *Ardisia keenanii* C.B. Clarke. A: Habit. B: Inflorescence. C & D: Flower. E: Calyx. F: Sepals. G: Calyx with Gynoecium. H: Corolla. I: Androecium. J: Gynoecium.

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Ardisia keenanii is closely allied with *A. solanacea.* However, former is clearly distinct from the latter by having rusty-villous round stem and branches, oblong leaf blade, with slightly dentate margin, abaxially rusty pubescent, villous elongated racemes, with glabrous calyx segments while *A. solanacea* is characterized by angular glabrous branchlets, elliptic or oblanceolate leaf blades, margin entire, abaxially punctate, paniculate with racemose or corymbose inflorescence (Chen and Pipoly, 1996).

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印度阿薩姆 *Ardisia keenanii* C.B. Clarke（紫金牛科）的再發現

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摘要：本文處理一種使人注目且特有的瀕危植物 – *Ardisia keenanii* C.B. Clake 其再發現。該物種在消失後的第 138 年，被重新發現生長於印度阿薩姆邦。本文提供了詳細的物種分類特徵及描述以利其辨識區別。

關鍵詞：*Ardisia keenanii*、阿薩姆邦、極度瀕危、再發現。

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