

RESEARCH NOTES

НАУЧНЫЕ ЗАМЕТКИ

BEGONIA DICRESSINE (BEGONIACEAE): A NEW RECORD FOR INDIA

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Begonia, belonging to the family Begoniaceae, is one of the largest Angiosperm genera with a pan-tropical distribution. Northeastern India shows a high degree of endemism with several endemic species described from the region. *Begonia dicressine*, so far known from Myanmar, has been recorded for the first time in India from Namdapha National Park. Hence, the present record makes the westernmost distribution of the species and a new record for the flora of India.

Key words: Arunachal Pradesh, flora of India, geographical extension, new addition, morphology, national park

Begonia L. (Begoniaceae), with 2001 accepted species, is one of the largest genera and the fastest growing plant genus in the world. It is divided into 70 sections based on a combination of characters, including placentation, number of locules in the ovary and fruit morphology (Hughes et al., 2015). The genus *Begonia* is pan-tropically distributed with species in the Americas, Africa and Asia. So far, Northeast India is represented by a total of 42 species of *Begonia*, falling under four sections, namely *Begonia* sect. *Diploclinium* (Lindl.) A.DC., sect. *Parvibegonia* A.DC., sect. *Platycentrum* (Klotzsch) A.DC., and sect. *Monophyllum* A.DC. (Camfield & Hughes, 2018; Odyuo et al., 2018; Taram et al., 2020; Krishna et al., 2021). The species we here report as new for India belongs to the section *Platycentrum*, the most species-rich section in the region. Species belonging to this section are rhizomatous ones with or without an upright stem. The anthers are open via long side slits and have extended connectives; ovaries are 2-locular with 2–3 styles and with three unequal wings (Camfield & Hughes, 2018).

During expeditions conducted from 2017–2020 to the tropics of Arunachal Pradesh, several species of *Begonia* were recorded. Of them, *B. oyuniae* Taram & N.Krishna has been recently described (Taram et al., 2020), while others are in press.

One such interesting specimen of a *Begonia* was collected from Namdapha National Park of Changlang district in 2017, which was identified as *Begonia dicressine* Wahlsteen upon critical evaluation of relevant literature and type material deposited in various herbaria (e.g. CAL, ASSAM, K, E, PE). So far, *B. dicressine* is known only from Myanmar (Wahlsteen,

2021; Maw et al., 2020). Hence, we report it here as a new record for the flora of India (Fig.).

Measurements and morphological character assessments of the specimen have been examined based on fresh material and dried specimens. The data have been compared with published descriptions of morphologically similar species (Clarke, 1879; Gu et al., 2007; Hughes et al., 2015; Camfield & Hughes, 2018; Wahlsteen, 2018, 2019, 2021; Maw et al., 2020; Taram et al., 2020) and type specimens in herbaria (BM, E, K, NY and PE).

Begonia dicressine Wahlsteen

Specimen examined: India, Arunachal Pradesh, Namdapha National Park, Changlang district, about 500 m a.s.l., 02.01.2017, D. Borah, M. Taram, No. 117 (Herbarium of Rajiv Gandhi University) (Fig.).

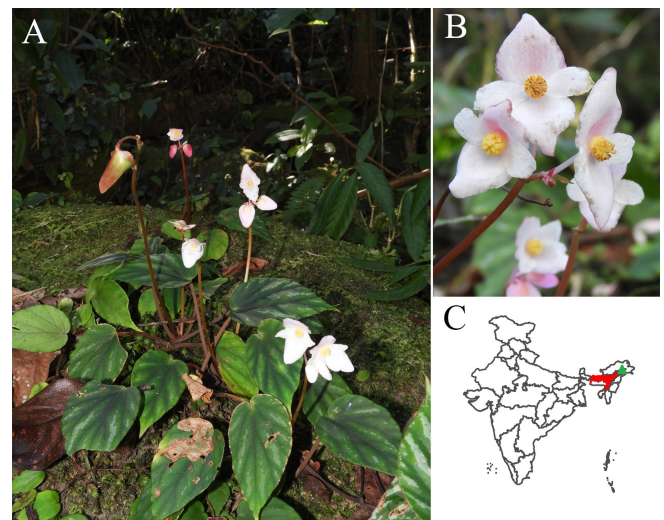


Fig. *Begonia dicressine*. Designations: A: Habit; B: Male flowers; C: Distribution in India.

Begonia dicressine was described in 2019 from Kachin state, Myanmar (Wahlsteen, 2019). The publication was overlooked, and the species was erroneously re-described by Maw et al. (2020). Later, the species effectively merged under *B. dicressine* (Wahlsteen, 2021). It is close to *Begonia rockii*, but differs in having hairy petioles with long soft white hairs, leaves with an irregularly crenate margin and glabrous inflorescences. The protologue (Wahlsteen, 2019) erroneously describes *B. dicressine* as a species with unicoloured leaves. However, a mature plant develops distinct silvery patches between the veins (Maw et al., 2020). With this finding in Namdapha National Park, this species is recorded for the first time for the flora of India.

The present conservation status of *B. dicressine* is Not Evaluated, as no proper assessment has been studied of the present populations in all countries. However, in Namdapha National Park, it faces no direct threats as it is present in the core area of the Protected Area.

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BEGONIA DICRESSINE (BEGONIACEAE): НОВИНКА ДЛЯ ИНДИИ

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Begonia (Begoniaceae) – один из крупнейших родов цветковых растений, распространенный в тропических регионах. Для северо-восточной Индии характерен высокий уровень эндемизма. Кроме того, ряд эндемичных видов были описаны из этого региона. *Begonia dicressine*, до сих пор известный только из Мьянмы, был впервые обнаружен в Индии на территории национального парка Намдафа. Таким образом, данная находка представляет собой наиболее западное местонахождение вида и новый вид для флоры Индии.

Ключевые слова: Аруначал-Прадеш, географическое расширение ареала, морфология, национальный парк, новое дополнение, флора Индии