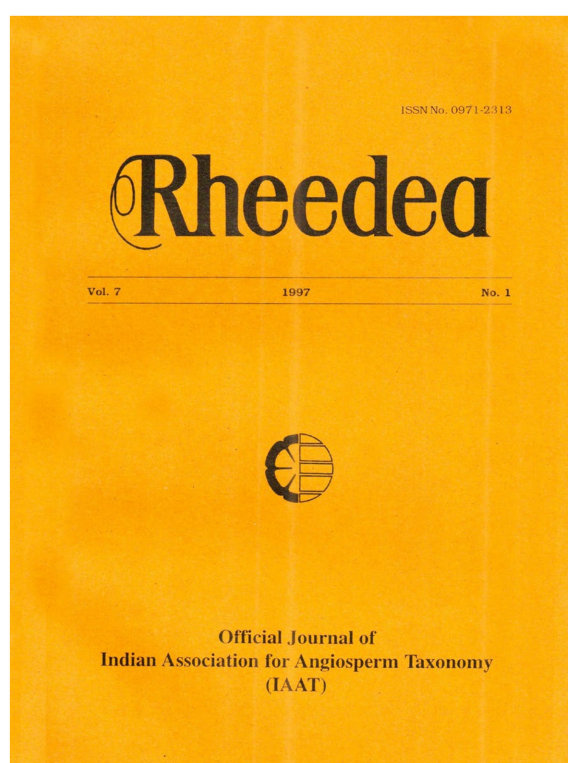




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How to cite:

Nageswara Rao A. 1997. A new species of *lone* Lindl. (Orchidaceae) from Arunachal Pradesh, India. *Rheedeia* 7(1): 47–50.

<https://dx.doi.org/10.22244/rheedeia.1997.07.01.09>

Published in print: 30.06.1997

Published Online: 01.01.2022



A new species of *Ione* Lindl. (Orchidaceae) from Arunachal Pradesh, India

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Abstract

The concept of treating the orchid genus *Ione* Lindl. separate from *Sunipia* Lindl. is supported. A new species of Orchidaceae viz., *Ione arunachalense* Nageswara Rao is described and an identification key is provided for the 6 species of *Ione* found in Arunachal Pradesh.

INTRODUCTION

Lindley established two genera in the family Orchidaceae viz. *Sunipia* and *Ione* in 1833 and 1853 respectively based on the structure of pollinarium. According to him, the former has pollinia with two free stipes with 2 separate viscidia while the latter has pollinia with 2 stipes which are fused at apex and attached to a single common viscidium.

Later Hooker (1890) accepted *Sunipia* Lindl. as a separate genus but denied the genus status to *Ione* Lindl. and transferred all the species of *Ione* to the genus *Bulbophyllum* Thou. King and Pantling (1898) while describing the orchids of Sikkim recognised the species of *Sunipia* and *Ione* as quite distinct from *Bulbophyllum*, but however considered the former two as congeneric and surprisingly preferred to retain the name *Ione* as a valid name over earlier published name *Sunipia* and considered the latter as only a "legendary genus." This has been followed by Seidenfaden (1969) in his monographic work on the genus *Ione* Lindl.

Subsequently, Hunt (1971) recognised the priority of *Sunipia* over *Ione* and transferred all the species of *Ione* to *Sunipia*, treating *Ione* as a synonym. This was followed by later orchid taxonomists like Pradhan (1979), Seidenfaden (1986) *et al.*

Now, of late, orchidologists like Garay *et al.* (1994) and Seidenfaden (1995) have realized Lindley's old concept and recognised *Ione* and *Sunipia* as two distinct genera.

During the course of critical study on the species of *Ione* Lindl. in Arunachal Pradesh, a specimen from Tale Valley in Subansiri district was found to be quite distinct from the so far known species of the genus and hence it is described here as a new ones.

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Ione arunachalense Nageswara Rao, *sp. nov.* (Fig. 1)

Ione minor Seidenf. affinis, sed differt foliis petiolaris flore singulari, sepalis lateralibus liberis, labello lobo intermedio acuminato.

Type: India, Arunachal Pradesh, Lower Subansiri district, Tale Valley (1200 m), *Ingalthalli & Benedict 20350* (Holo-Orchid Herbarium, Tipi).

Small epiphytic herb. Rhizome ca. 1 mm thick, slender. Pseudobulbs 6-9 x 5-8 mm, ovoid, ca. 2 cm apart on the rhizome with slender roots below, 1-leaved. Leaves ca. 3 x 0.5 cm, oblong, subacute, with a distinct petiole of ca. 7 mm long. Scäpe ca. 2 cm long, arising from the base of the pseudobulb. Flower solitary, ca. 2 cm long, crimson coloured. Bract ca. 6 x 1 mm, lanceolate, acute, shorter than the pedicellate ovary. Sepals ca. 10 x 2.5 mm, subequal, lanceolate, acute, 3-nerved; lateral sepals free. Petals ca. 3 x 3 mm, ovate-suborbicular, minutely apiculate, 1-nerved. Lip about 9 mm long, with a median narrow ridge on the disc from base to the middle; lateral lobes 3 x 5 mm, auricular, entire; midlobe ca. 6 mm long, linear, acuminate. Column very short, ca. 1 mm long. Anther small, 2-celled. Pollinia 4 in 2 groups, each group with a short, linear stipe and a gland at apex. Rostellum with 2 processes in front. Ovary with pedicel ca. 12 mm long, pale green.

Flowering: June

Distribution: Known only from lower Subansiri district, Tale Valley (1200 m), in wet evergreen subtropical forest.

Ione arunachalense Nageswara Rao *sp. nov.* is very close to *I. minor* Seidenf. which is an endemic species of Thailand but differs from it in having petioled leaves, single-flowered inflorescence, free lateral sepals and linear-acuminate midlobe of lip.

With the present new species the genus *Ione* is represented in Arunachal Pradesh by six species which may be identified by the following key:

1. Lateral sepals free.
 2. Flowers solitary.
 3. Scape less than 1 cm long; flowers large; sepals 2 cm long *I. jainii*
 3. Scape more than 1 cm long; flowers small; sepals 1 cm long *I. arunachalense*
 2. Flowers 2 or 3 per inflorescence *I. andersonii*

Ione arunachalense sp. nov. (Orchidaceae)

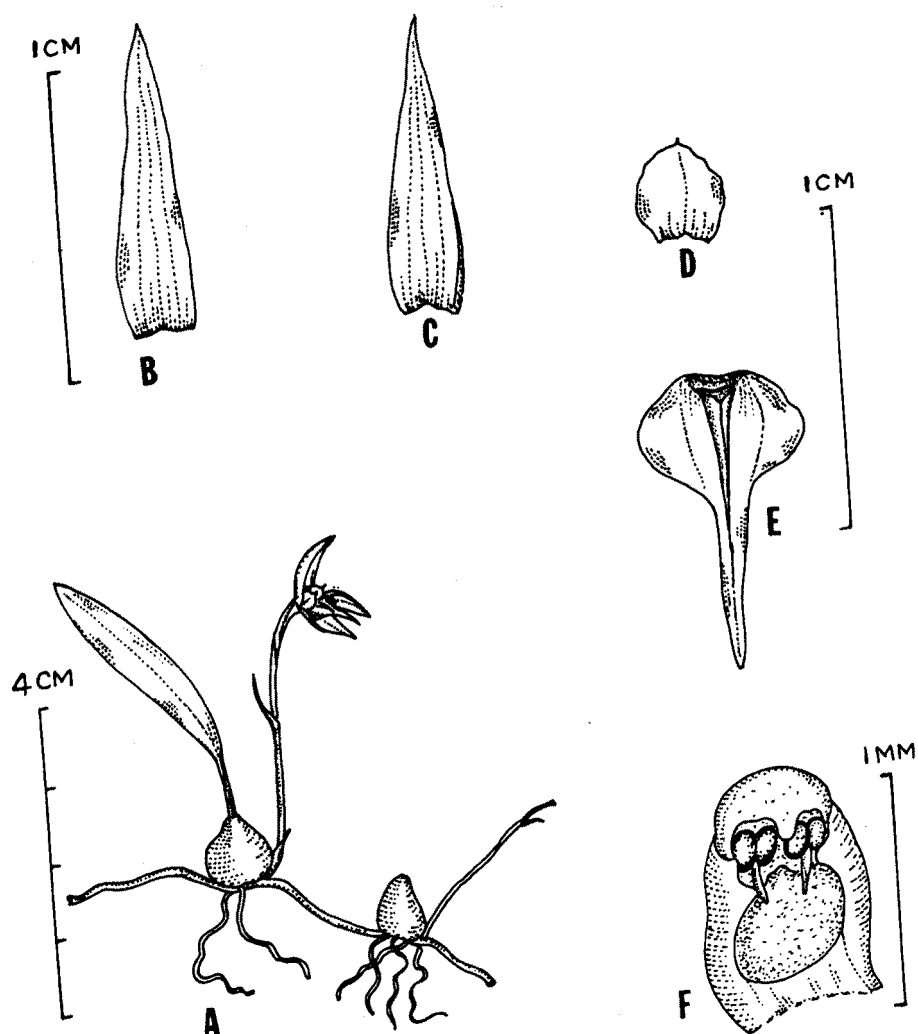


Fig. 1. *Ione arunachalense* Nageswara Rao, *sp. nov.* A. Habit; B. Dorsal sepal; C. Lateral sepal; D. Petal; E. Lip; F. Column with pollinia *in situ* (Drawn from the holotype-Ingalthalli et Bennedict 20350).

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1. Lateral sepals connate or coherent along the inner margins.
4. Petals with entire margins; lip broader at distal half with serrate margins *I. bicolor*
4. Petals with serrate margins; lip broader at basal half and narrowed at apex.
5. Inflorescence upto 40 cm long; flowers drooping, bracts scarious, petals suborbicular *I. cirrhata*
5. Inflorescence upto 10 cm long; flowers erect, bracts not scarious, petals oblong *I. candida*

Acknowledgements

Sincere thanks are due to Mr. G.P. Shukla, IFS, Principal Chief Conservator of Forests; Mr. K. Namchoom, IFS, Chief Conservator of Forests and Mr. M.L. Deori, IFS, Director, State Forest Research Institute, Arunachal Pradesh for encouragement and facilities. Thanks are also due to Dr. Gunnar Seidenfaden, Denmark for his valuable comments on the new taxon.

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