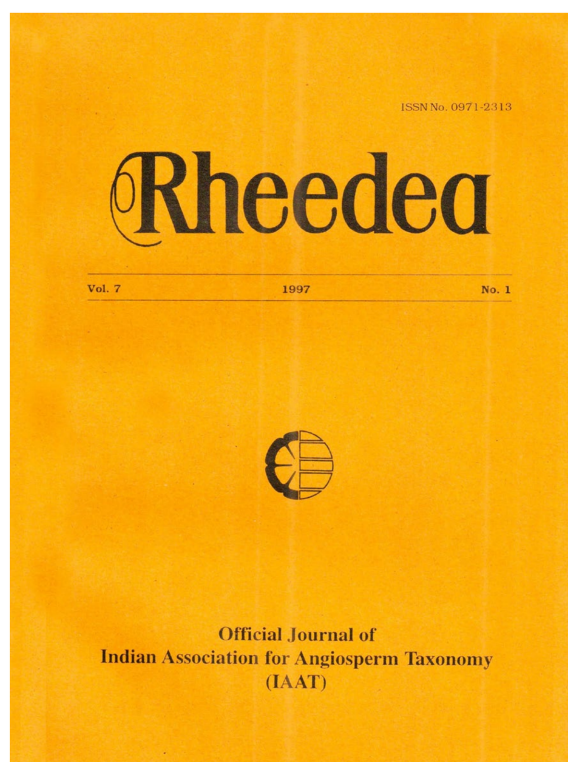




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Rediscovery of *Taeniophyllum scaberulum* Hook. f., an endemic orchid from Periyar Tiger Reserve, Kerala, India

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Abstract

Taeniophyllum scaberulum Hook. f. (Orchidaceae) first collected in 1854 from 'Travancore', had so far not been located and was considered extinct. Now the species is collected after a gap of 140 years from the Periyar Tiger Reserve, Kerala.

The palaeotropic genus *Taeniophyllum* consists of about 120 species, of which eight are reported from India (Sathish Kumar & Manilal, 1994). Among the Indian species, four are from the Himalayas, two from the Andamans and the rest from Peninsular India. *T. alwisii* Lindl. was considered to be restricted to Sri Lanka until it was reported recently from Tamil Nadu (Seidenfaden, 1983; Ansari *et al.*, 1994). The other South Indian species *viz.*, *T. scaberulum* was described by Hooker based on the specimen collected by Rev. E. Johnson from 'Cottayam, Travancore' in 1854. After the first collection no later collections have been known and the species was categorised as endangered (Henry *et al.*, 1979; Kumar & Sasidharan, 1986; Ahmedullah & Nayar, 1987). The earlier efforts made to relocate the species were not successful and it made the workers to consider it as extinct (Sathish Kumar, 1991; Sarkar, 1995). No specimen of this species was hitherto available in any of the Indian herbaria. Recently the species was collected during the studies on the flora of Periyar Tiger Reserve in Kerala state. The present collection after about 140 years of its first collection demonstrates that it is very rare but has not become extinct. Detailed description and illustrations based on fresh collections are provided for a thorough understanding of the species.

***Taeniophyllum scaberulum* Hook. f.**, Fl. Brit. India 6:77. 1890; Fischer in Gamble, Fl. Pres. Madras 1448. 1928; Bose & Bhattacharjee, Orch. India 497. 1980 (Fig. 1).

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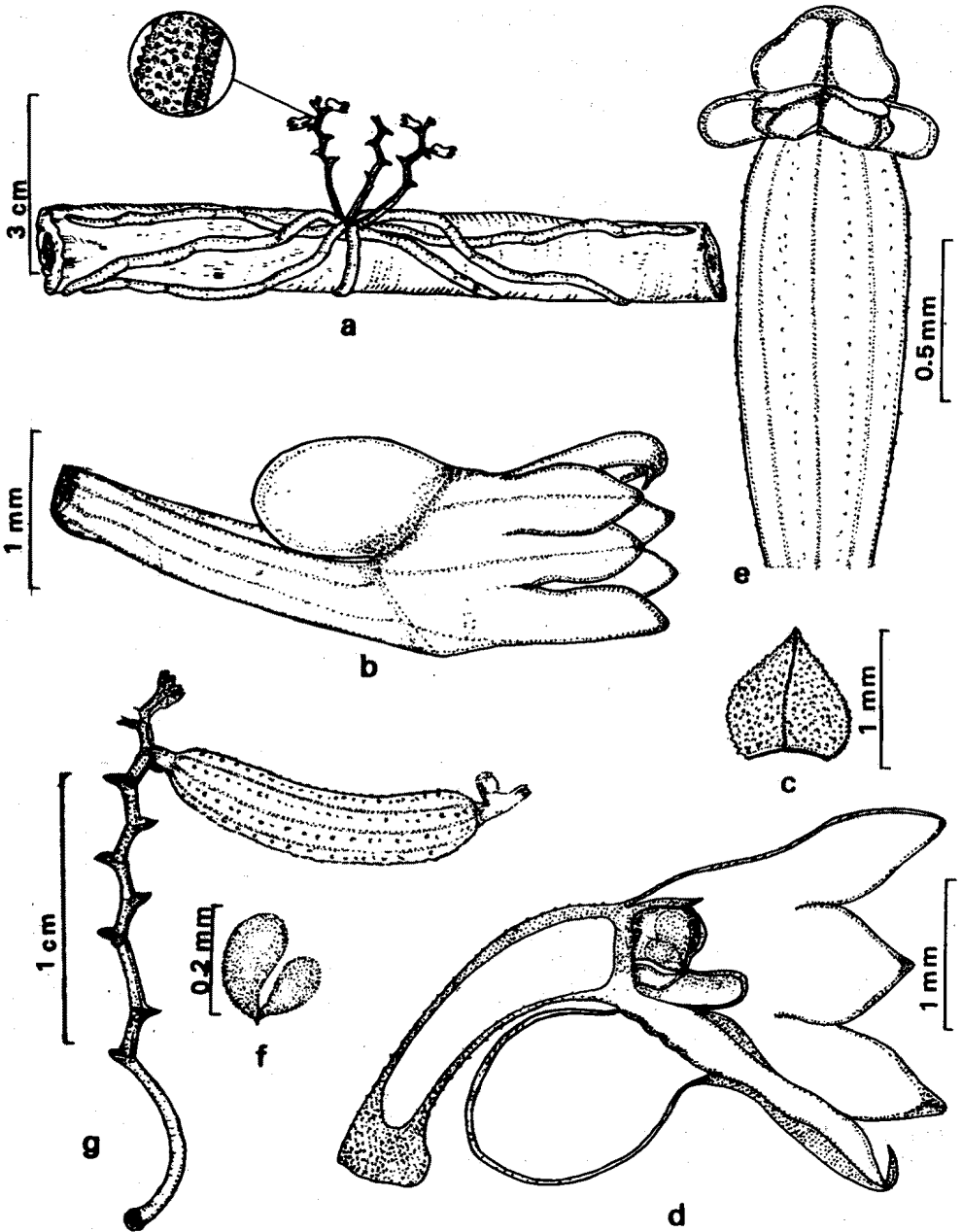


Fig. 1. *Taeniophyllum scaberulum* Hook. f. a. Habit; b. Flower; c. Bract; d. Flower - L.S.; e. Column; f. Pollinia; g. Fruit.

***Taeniophyllum scaberulum* Hook. f. (Orchidaceae)**

Small leafless epiphytes. Stem much reduced. Roots subterete, 50-80 x 1 mm. Spikes 15-20 mm long produced from the centre of the reduced stem, 2-4-flowered; peduncle angular. Bracts 0.9 x 1 mm, ovate-acute, persistent. Flowers subsessile, 3.5-4 x 2 mm, creamy white. Sepals and petals united into a 6-toothed tube; dorsal sepal 1-1.1 x 0.9 mm, ovate, subacute, basally 2-veined, lateral sepals 1.1 x 0.8 mm, ovate, 1-veined. Petals 0.9 x 0.8 - 0.9 mm, ovate, acute, 1-veined. Lip 2.2 x 1 mm, ovate-acute, tip recurved into a barb-like mucro; base saccate, basally 4-veined, united to form a single vein at the apex. Column 0.5 x 0.5-0.6 mm, with 2 lateral oblong rounded outgrowths at base; rostellum acute. Anther terminal, 0.2 x 0.1 mm, unequally 4-locular; pollinia 4 of 2 unequal superposed pair, pyriform, papillate. Ovary 1.6-1.8 x 0.2 mm. Capsule 10-12 x 2 mm, oblong, subfalcate, 9-ribbed, scaberulous.

Flowering & Fruiting: February - June.

Specimens examined: India, Kerala State: Periyar Tiger Reserve, Idukki District, alt. 900 m. 10-6-1995. *K.P. Rajesh 16214; Ibid.*, 20-9-1995. *K.P. Rajesh 16831* (KFRI).

Note: Hooker (1890) recorded it as growing on branches of teak (*Tectona grandis*). We found the species growing on *Catunaregam spinosa*, *Mesua ferrea*, *Osbeckia lawsonii*, *Psidium guajava* and *Terminalia paniculata*.

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