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NOTES ON TWO RARE ORCHIDS OF MEGHALAYA

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ABSTRACT

Vanda alpina Lindl. *Vanda pumila* Hk. f. have been collected from the forests of Sonapahar (Khasia hills). Studies show that these two species are rare and recorded here for their extended distribution.

During floristic studies on the flora of Meghalaya, the author collected two rare and interesting taxa viz. *Vanda alpina* Lindl. and *Vanda pumila* Hook. f. from the virgin forests of Sonapahar, Khasi Hills. A critical study and scrutiny of the herbarium specimens revealed that these species have not been represented in ASSAM herbarium. The former was collected by Gibson in 1836; and by Hooker & Thomson in 1850 from Nongkhlow, Khasi Hills and the specimens are housed at CAL. The latter has so far been reported from Sikkim, Darjeeling, Bhutan and Western Himalayas. Its occurrence in Khasi Hills forms an eastward extension of distribution. King & Pantling (1898) and Pradhan (1979) have given the illustrations of these species but the illustration of *Vanda alpina* Lindl. seems to be confusing. In view of this, a detailed illustrated description based on the fresh material is provided.

Vanda alpina Lindl. Fol. Orchid. 10. 1854 ; Hook. f. Fl. Brit. India 6 : 53. 1890 ; King & Pantl. in Ann. Roy. Bot. Gard. Calcutta 8 : 217. t. 289. 1898 ; Pradhan, Indian Orch. 2 : 569. 1979.

Roots long, wiry. greenish-ashy. Stems *ca* 15-20 cm high ; leaves *ca* 8.0-11.5 × 1.2-1.8 cm long, alternate, coriaceous, keeled, obliquckly praemorse at tip. Racemes *ca* 1.5-2 cm long, axillary, 2-flowered. Flowers *ca* 1.0-1.3 cm across ; pedicel *ca* 3 cm long, bracteate ; bracts *ca* 0.3 × 0.4 cm, sheathing, ovate, acute. Dorsal sepal *ca* 1.5 × 0.6-0.7 cm, obscurely bilobed at apex, 7-parallel veined ; lateral sepals *ca* 1.5 × 0.6-0.7 cm, 7-parallel veined. Lateral petals *ca* 1.4 × 0.5 cm, 5-parallel veined. Lip fleshy, shorter or equal to the lateral sepals, hypochilium shallow *ca* 0.5 cm broad, inner side blackish-purple, epichilium with two lateral lobules projecting upward and middle one downwards. Upper surface of midlobe with eight shallow, smooth, brown ridges. Column *ca* 0.4 cm long, operculate ; pollinia *ca* 0.1 cm broad.

Ecology : Epiphytic ; in moist and shady places in the forest.

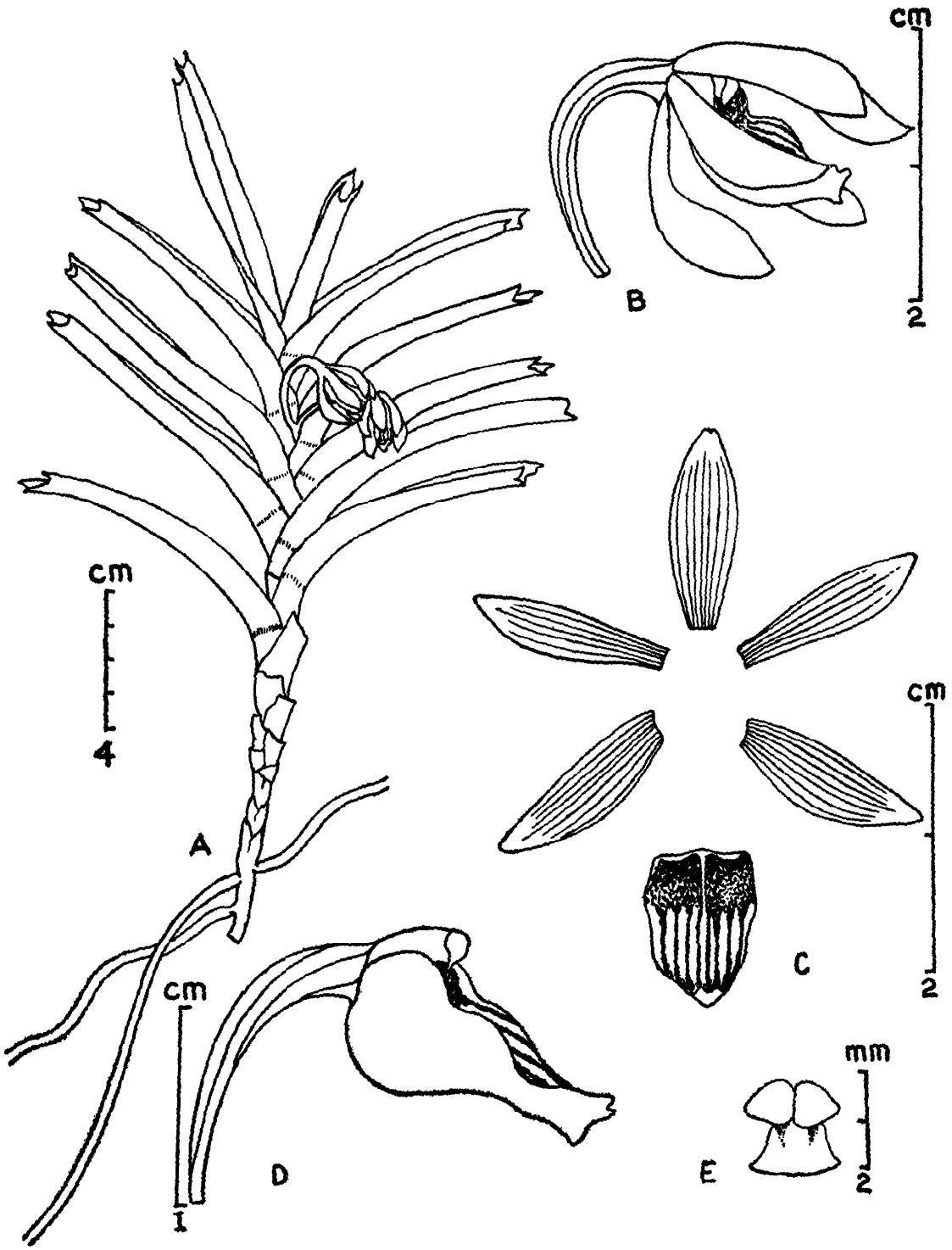
Flowering : November (earlier literature records it in July).

Distribution : INDIA (Garhwal, Darjeeling, Sikkim, Meghalaya), BHUTAN.

Specimen examined : *Chauhan* 82358 (ASSAM). Live plants have been introduced in POSSCEF house, B.S.I., at 'WOODLANDS', Shillong.

Present status : Rare.

Date of receipt : 12.4.84. Date of acceptance: 26.2.85



Vanda alpina Lindl.

Figs. A-E : A. Habit. B. Flower. C. Floral parts. D. Column with lip. E. Pollinia.

Vanda pumila Hook. f. Fl. Brit. India 6 : 53. 1890 ; King & Pantl. in Ann. Roy. Bot. Gard. Calcutta 8 : 216. t. 288. 1898 ; Pradhan, Indian Orch. 2 : 570. 1979.

This species, earlier recorded from Sikkim, Darjeeling, Bhutan and Western Himalayas, has recently been collected from Khasi Hills and shows an eastward extension of distribution.

Ecology : Grows on low tree branches in moist and shady places in the forest.

Flowering : July-August (earlier literature records it in May).

Distribution : INDIA (Darjeeling, Sikkim, Meghalaya, Western Himalayas).

Specimen examined : *Chauhan* 82359 (ASSAM). Few live plants have been introduced in POSSCEF house, Botanical Survey of India, 'WOODLANDS', Shillong.

Present status : Rare.

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