

A new variety of *Stauranthera umbrosa* (Griffith) C.B. Clarke [Gesneriaceae] from North-East India

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Abstract

Stauranthera umbrosa (Griffith) C.B. Clarke var. *upendrae* Su.Datta, T.K. Paul & AP. Das has been described and illustrated.

INTRODUCTION

The genus *Stauranthera* Benth [Gesneriaceae] comprises of 8 species distributed in South East Asia to New Guinea (Mabberly 2008). C.B. Clarke (1885) recorded 3 species from the British India which includes one doubtful species. At present the genus is represented in India by 2 species viz. *S. grandiflora* Benth and *S. umbrosa* (Griffith) C.B. Clarke occurs in NE India.

While working on the family Gesneriaceae of NE India, it was found that some specimens of the genus *Stauranthera* Benth deposited at Central National Herbarium (CAL) are merely named as "*Stauranthera umbrosa* var. *upendrae* var. nov." by U. C. Bhattacharya. But so far this new variety has not been published. After a study of these specimens the authors are convinced that these specimens placed under this name represent a distinct variety which needs to be described.

These specimens were collected from Cachar Hills of Assam and Garo Hills of Meghalaya which are different from *S. umbrosa* var. *umbrosa* and hence described here as new variety of this species.

TAXONOMIC TREATMENT

Stauranthera umbrosa (Griffith) C.B. Clarke var. *upendrae* Su.Datta, T.K. Paul & AP. Das **var. nov.** Similar to var. *umbrosa* but differs from it by having its upper surface of lamina covered with distinct appressed strigose hairs whereas in var. *umbrosa* the lamina upper surface is glabrescent. **Fig. 1.**

Holotype: India: Meghalaya, Tura, Garo Hills, 3,000 ft. (909 m), 14.2.1886, C.B. Clarke, 43076 G, Acc. No. 331802 (CAL).

Paratypes: India: Assam: North Cachar hills, Damchara, 2500 ft. (762 m), Sept. 1903, Shaik Mokim, 22 (CAL); Cachar, Cautleycherre, Sept. 1903, Shaik Mokim, 38 (CAL) (2 specimen). Meghalaya: Tura peak, Garo Hills, 2500 ft. (762 m), Dec. 1885, Amber Myanu (?) s.n., Acc. no. 331804 (CAL).

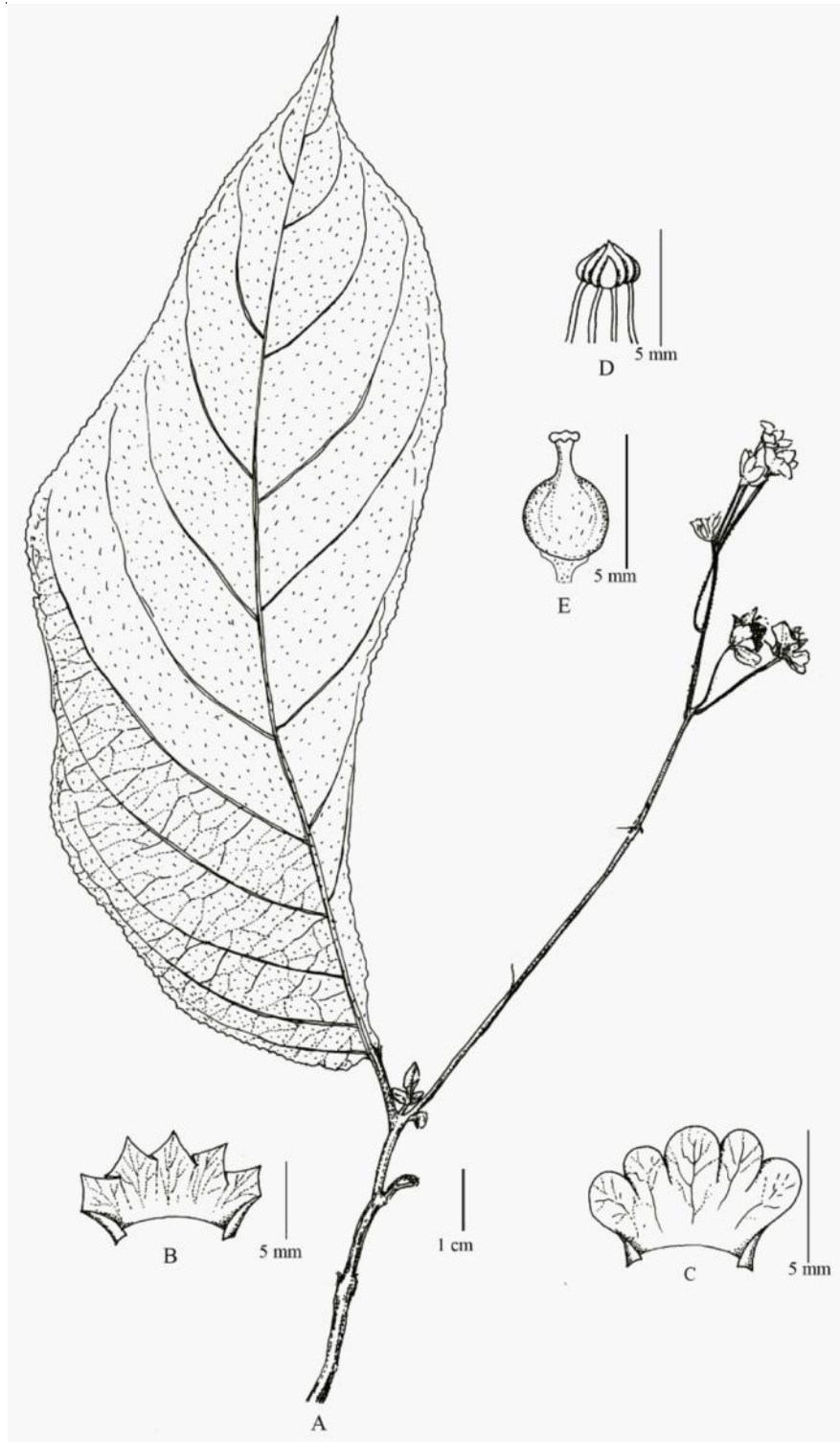


Figure 1. *Stauranthera umbrosa* (Griffith) C.B. Clarke var. *upendrae* Su.Datta, T.K. Paul & AP. Das: A. Flowering twig B. Calyx C. Corolla D. Anthers E. Ovary

Terrestrial perennial, succulent, non-rhizomatous herbs, upto 30 cm high. Stems 4 – 10 cm. Lower leaves alternate, upper opposite to sub-opposite, strongly anisophyllous, smaller leaf much reduced to linear scale like appendage, 2 – 4 (7) mm long, sessile; normal lamina ovate-elliptic to obovate, (6.5) 15 – 22 x (2.5) 3.5 – 9.5 cm, unequal-sided, distantly minutely crenate or entire, acuminate, base obliquely cuneate, rarely rounded, lateral veins 6 – 12 on either side of mid-vein, not terminating along margins, prominent on both surfaces, raised beneath, mid-vein finely channeled above, upper surface of leaf with adpressed strigose hairs, *ca.* 0.5 mm long; glandular hairs on the lower surface, sparsely puberulent along veins; petioles (0.4) 0.7 – 2.7 (5) cm. Cymes lax, pseudo-terminal, or from axil of reduced leaf, few- to many-flowered; peduncles puberulent, (3) 8.2 – 15 cm long; bracts 2, opposite, linear, adaxially puberulent, 3 – 4 mm long; bracteoles absent. Flowers *ca.* 7 mm long; pedicels puberulent, (0.5) 2.5 – 5 cm long. Calyx *ca.* 4 mm long, 5-lobed, plicate between adjoining lobes, lobes subequal, broadly triangular, *ca.* 2 – 3 x 2 mm, tips acute, entire, both surfaces thinly puberulent, persistent in fruit. Corolla puberulent outside, inside glabrous, tube campanulate, gibbous or saccate at base, limb indistinctly 2-lipped, adaxial lip 2-lobed, nearly as long as abaxial lip, *ca.* 3 mm long, abaxial lip 3-lobed, *ca.* 3.5 mm long, lobes subequal, apex rounded, tube slightly longer than limb, *ca.* 2-3 x 4 mm. Stamens 4, adnate to corolla tube near base, included, *ca.* 5 – 7.5 mm long, filaments 4 – 6 mm long, glabrous, anthers 2 celled, basifixed, coherent laterally to form a cone, connective not projected, dehiscence longitudinal. Pistil *ca.* 5 – 6 mm; ovary subglobose, 1-loculed, densely puberulent, *ca.* 2-3 mm in diam.; style broad, thinly puberulent, 1.5 – 2 mm long; stigma 1, terminal, broadly subinfunduliform, densely puberulent. Capsules straight, depressed-globose, *ca.* 4 – 5 mm in diam., pubescent, membranous, remains covered by accrescent calyx, *ca.* 6 – 8 (10) mm long; dehiscing transversely or irregularly circumsciss near the base. Seeds numerous, minute, *ca.* 0.5 mm long, obovoid to oblong, acute at both ends, smooth.

Flowers & Fruits: September – February

Habitat: In dense forest, moist and damp places, 700 – 900 m.

Distribution: INDIA: Assam, Meghalaya (endemic)

Etymology: The varietal epithet has been named after Dr. Upendra Chandra Bhattacharyya, ex-Scientist of Botanical Survey of India.

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