



## Two new species of *Henckelia* Spreng. (Gesneriaceae) from Arunachal Pradesh, India

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**ABSTRACT:** Two new species of *Henckelia* (Gesneriaceae), namely *Henckelia flaviflora* and *H. siyomensis* are described here. Detailed color plates, notes on their distribution and habitat, provisional IUCN conservation assessment are provided, along with tabular differentiation from morphologically similar species. Both these species inhabit shaded habitats along streams flowing through moist evergreen forests and are presently known only from the Eastern Himalayan Region of Arunachal Pradesh, India. *H. flaviflora* is described from Kamle district, whereas *H. siyomensis* is described from Shi-Yomi district.

**KEY WORDS:** Conservation, Eastern Himalaya, Flora, *Henckelia flaviflora*, *Henckelia siyomensis*, North East India, Taxonomy.

### INTRODUCTION

*Henckelia* Spreng. is one of the largest genera in the family Gesneriaceae with around 84 species (Sahani *et al.*, 2024; Khanal *et al.*, 2025; Kishwan *et al.*, 2025; Chowlu *et al.*, 2026; GRC, 2026; POWO, 2026;) distributed from Western Himalaya, Nepal, Eastern Himalaya to South China, Malay Peninsula, Thailand, Java, Sumatra, Sarawak and Tropical India and Sri Lanka (Wood 1974; Weber *et al.*, 2011; Yang *et al.*, 2019). The genus has undergone major taxonomic changes and has absorbed many species formerly present in *Chirita* Buch.-Ham. ex D. Don (Weber *et al.*, 2011) and *Didymocarpus* Wall. (Weber and Burt, 1997). Since the recent remodeling by Weber *et al.*, (2011), more than 20 new species of *Henckelia* have been described (Shi and Yang, 2021) especially from the Indo-China region. In India, *Henckelia* is one of the most diverse genera in the family Gesneriaceae, with around 50 species (Chowlu *et al.*, 2026; GRC, 2026). The genus is primarily distributed in North-East India with around 29 species (Sahani *et al.*, 2024; Taram and Borah 2024; Borah *et al.*, 2025; Chowlu *et al.*, 2026), peninsular India with 16 species (Mathew *et al.*, 2022) and in Western Himalaya with three species (Naithani *et al.*, 2019).

The genus *Henckelia* comprises caulescent or acaulescent herbs or subshrubs that usually inhabit damp and shady localities (Weber *et al.*, 2011; Borah *et al.*, 2025). The genus is included in subtribe Didymocarpiinae G. Don with more than 30 other genera (Weber *et al.*, 2013). *Henckelia* (along with *Damrongia* Kerr. ex Craib, *Microchirita* (C.B. Clarke) Y.Z. Wang, *Liebigia* Endl, *Primulina* Hance, *Chayamaritia* D.J. Middleton & Mich. Möller) can be easily differentiated from other genera of the subtribe by presence of a chiritoid stigma; where upper lobe of the stigma is strongly reduced as

compared to the lower lobe (Weber *et al.*, 2011; Middleton *et al.*, 2015; Möller *et al.*, 2017). *Damrongia* and *Primulina* can be differentiated from *Henckelia* based on acaulescent herbaceous habit with scapose inflorescence, while *Liebigia* can be distinguished on account of bearded anthers (Weber *et al.*, 2011); *Microchirita* on account of being annual and monocarpic (Wood, 1974) (vs polycarpic in *Henckelia*); and *Chayamaritia* in having alternately arranged leaves and imbricate sepals (Middleton *et al.*, 2015) (vs oppositely arranged leaves and valvate sepals in *Henckelia*).

In August 2025, a field investigation was undertaken to study distribution and taxonomy of family Gesneriaceae in the state of Arunachal Pradesh, India. In the course of the field survey, specimens of various *Henckelia* species were observed, photographed and collected from various localities in the state. During the identification procedure, two collections of *Henckelia* did not match with any known species. These species are described as new to science. To facilitate identification, color plates of these new taxa are provided, along with comparisons with morphologically similar species.

### MATERIALS AND METHODS

The specimens from these two species of *Henckelia* were compared with relevant literature and the protologues of the recently described species from Indo-Burma and Indo-China region (Wood, 1974; Weber and Burt, 1997; Wang *et al.*, 1998; Burt, 2001; Sinha and Dutta, 2016; Möller *et al.*, 2017; Sirimongkol *et al.*, 2019; Yang *et al.*, 2019; Sirimongkol, 2020; Shi and Yang, 2021; Bhattacharyya *et al.*, 2023; Taram, 2023; Sahani *et al.*, 2024; Taram and Borah, 2024; Borah *et al.*, 2025; Khanal *et al.*, 2025; Kishwan *et al.*, 2025; Taram *et al.*, 2025; Chowlu *et al.*, 2026). To ensure accurate



identification, the collected specimens were compared with herbarium vouchers—including type collections—of morphologically similar species from adjacent regions. This was conducted using high-resolution digital images available through online repositories such as the Chinese Virtual Herbarium (<https://www.cvh.ac.cn/>), the Indian Virtual Herbarium (<https://ivh.bsi.gov.in/>), and the Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF, <https://www.gbif.org/>).

The collected specimens were preserved and mounted based on techniques given in Davies *et al.* (2023). The conservation status was determined using guidelines given by the IUCN Standards and Petitions Committee (2024).

## TAXONOMIC TREATMENT

*Henckelia flaviflora* Kishwan, T.U.Thackeray & N.V.Page, *sp. nov.* **Figs 1–2**

**Type:** INDIA, Arunachal Pradesh, Kamle District, Between Raga and Daporijo, 22 August 2025, N.V.Page & S. Kishwan 25822 (holotype BSD!; isotype DD!).

**Diagnosis:** *Henckelia flaviflora* is morphologically similar to *H. xinpingensis* Y.H.Tan & Bin Yang in having linear to lanceolate bracts, bright yellow corolla and calyx divided below the middle. *Henckelia flaviflora* differs from *H. xinpingensis* based on the absence of stolons (vs. slender stolons from stem base and leaf axils), 10–15 pairs of secondary nerves on leaves (vs. secondary nerves 5–9 pairs), corolla tube narrow near the base, widening gradually towards the apex (vs. corolla tube  $\pm$ equal throughout), filaments of fertile stamens straight with swollen bases (vs. strongly geniculate), staminodes up to 0.1 cm long (vs. at least one staminode up to 0.6 cm), and densely pubescent style and ovary (vs. sparsely pubescent).

**Description:** Erect, perennial, caulescent herbs. *Stems* up to 30 cm high, pubescent, sometimes branched from the base. *Leaves* opposite, dark green adaxially, paler abaxially, elliptic to elliptic-lanceolate, 8–14  $\times$  4–6.5 cm, base asymmetric, obliquely cuneate, margin serrate or dentate,  $\pm$ entire near the base, pubescent adaxially, densely pilose on the midrib and nerves abaxially; *midrib* impressed adaxially, prominent and raised abaxially, thinning towards the apex; *secondary nerves* 10–15 pairs, often unequal on either side, impressed adaxially, raised abaxially; *petiole* 1.5–5 cm long, sparsely pubescent. *Inflorescence* axillary, 1-flowered, rarely 2-flowered; *peduncle* c. 1.2 cm long, stout, densely pilose; *bracts* paired, free, linear to narrowly lanceolate, 0.8–1.2  $\times$  c. 0.2 cm, acuminate, with a faint midrib, densely pilose; *pedicel* c. 1.4 cm, elongated in fruit, densely pilose. *Calyx* 5-lobed, fused to form a straight tube, persistent; *tube* c. 0.5 cm long, densely pilose outside, glabrous inside; *lobes* linear to narrowly lanceolate, 1–1.2 cm long, acuminate, densely pilose outside. *Corolla* infundibuliform, 2-lipped, upper lip shorter than the lower; *tube* c. 3 cm long,

straight up to c. 1 cm, broadening towards the apex, funnellform in the upper part, bright yellow, whitish or pale yellow near the base, with 2 yellow ridges on the lower lip inside, and 3 flaps on the upper lip inside, densely pilose outside, glabrous inside; *lobes* 5, bright yellow, glabrous to sparsely hairy outside, glabrous inside, 2 on the upper lip, ovate to orbicular, 0.8–1 cm diameter, slightly broader than long, 3 on the lower lip, lateral ones orbicular, 1.2–1.3 cm diameter, middle one broadly ovate, c. 1.2  $\times$  1.6 cm. *Fertile stamens* 2, inserted c. 2 cm from the base of the corolla; *filaments* c. 0.5 cm long, straight, swollen near the middle, pubescent near the apex, otherwise glabrous; *anthers* c. 0.2 cm across, fused face to face, pale white, glabrous. *Staminodes* 3, subequal. *Lateral staminodes* 2, inserted 1.2–1.3 cm from the base of the corolla, c. 0.1 cm long, glabrous. *Central staminode* inserted c. 0.7 cm from the base of the corolla, c. 0.05 cm long, glabrous. *Disc* annular, 0.1–0.15 cm long, shallowly 5-lobed, pale yellow, glabrous. *Ovary* cylindrical, slightly narrowed towards the apex, c. 2.2 cm long, c. 0.15 cm wide, pale white, densely pubescent; *stigma* chiritoid, upper lip very short, coarsely lobed, lower lip emarginate, c. 0.5 cm across, sparsely glandular pubescent outside, shortly pubescent inside; *style* linear, c. 0.8 cm, pale green, densely pubescent with eglandular hairs near the base and glandular hairs at the junction with stigma. *Capsules* up to 10 cm long, glabrous to shortly sparse pubescent. *Seeds* not seen.

**Habitat and Ecology:** This species occurs at 800–900 m a.s.l. in tropical hill forests of Kamle District in Arunachal Pradesh. It is found in moist, shaded areas along the streamside and associated with other Gesneriaceae members like *Henckelia oblongifolia*, *H. pumila*, and other plants like *Begonia* spp., *Globba* sp., *Helwingia* sp., *Medinilla rubicunda* etc.

**Conservation status:** *Henckelia flaviflora* is presently recorded from 2 subpopulations less than 5 km apart. The population is estimated to be around 100 individuals each, with the plants usually growing in small clusters along the streams. Based on estimated AOO of 8 km<sup>2</sup> and number of locations (=1), this species qualifies for the Critically Endangered category as per criterion B1, B2 and condition (a). Additionally, there is evidence to believe continuous decline in range size and number of mature individuals (condition b). This species is therefore provisionally assessed as Critically Endangered B1+2ab(i,ii,iv).

**Phenology:** Flowering in July, Fruiting in August–September.

**Etymology:** The species epithet *flaviflora* refers to the yellow-flower.

**Notes:** The erect, caulescent habit, linear or narrow lanceolate bracts and hairy calyx of *Henckelia flaviflora* places it morphologically close to *H. forrestii*, among the species recorded from India. However, the bright yellow flowers of the plant instantly separate it from the latter

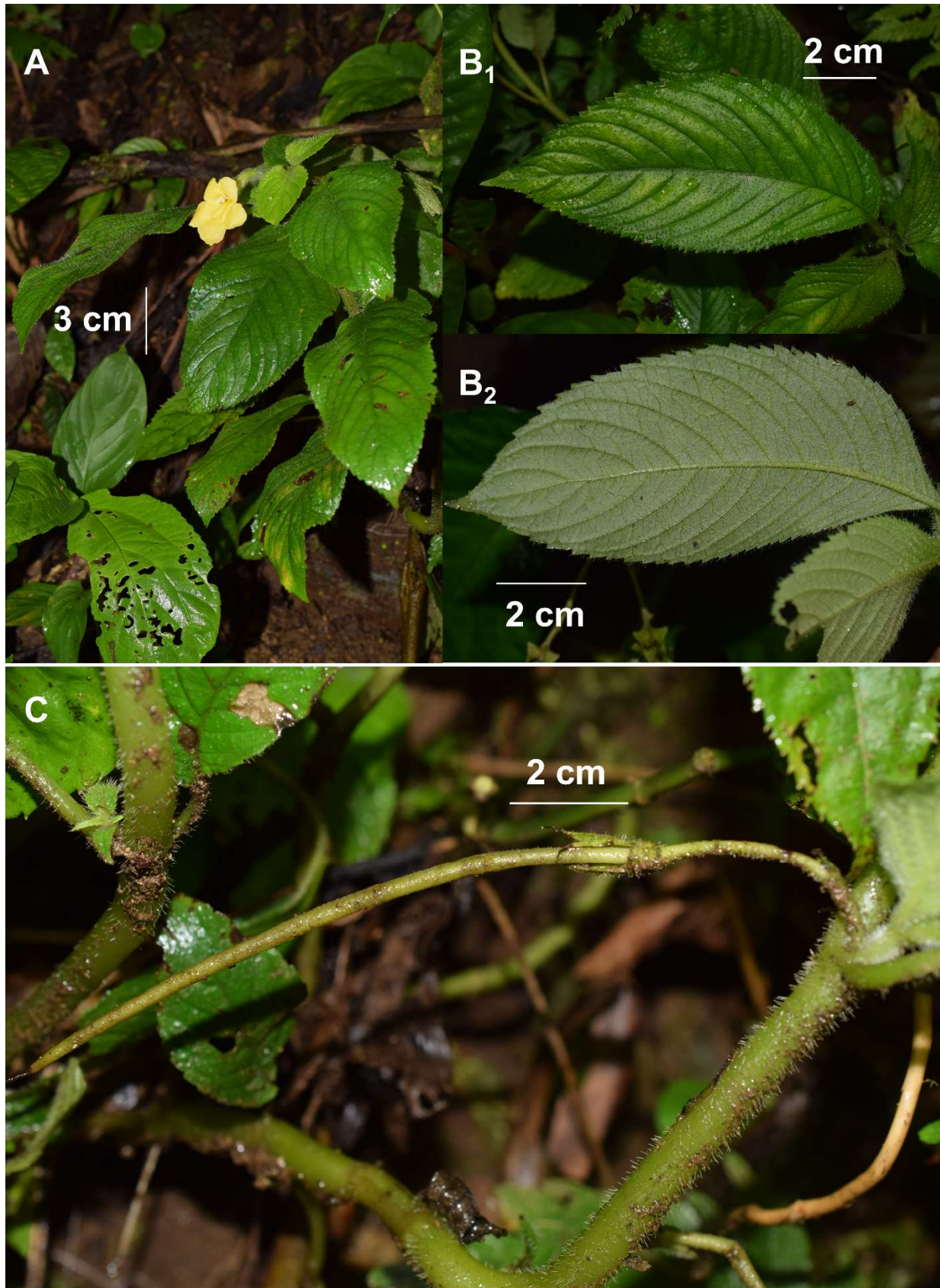
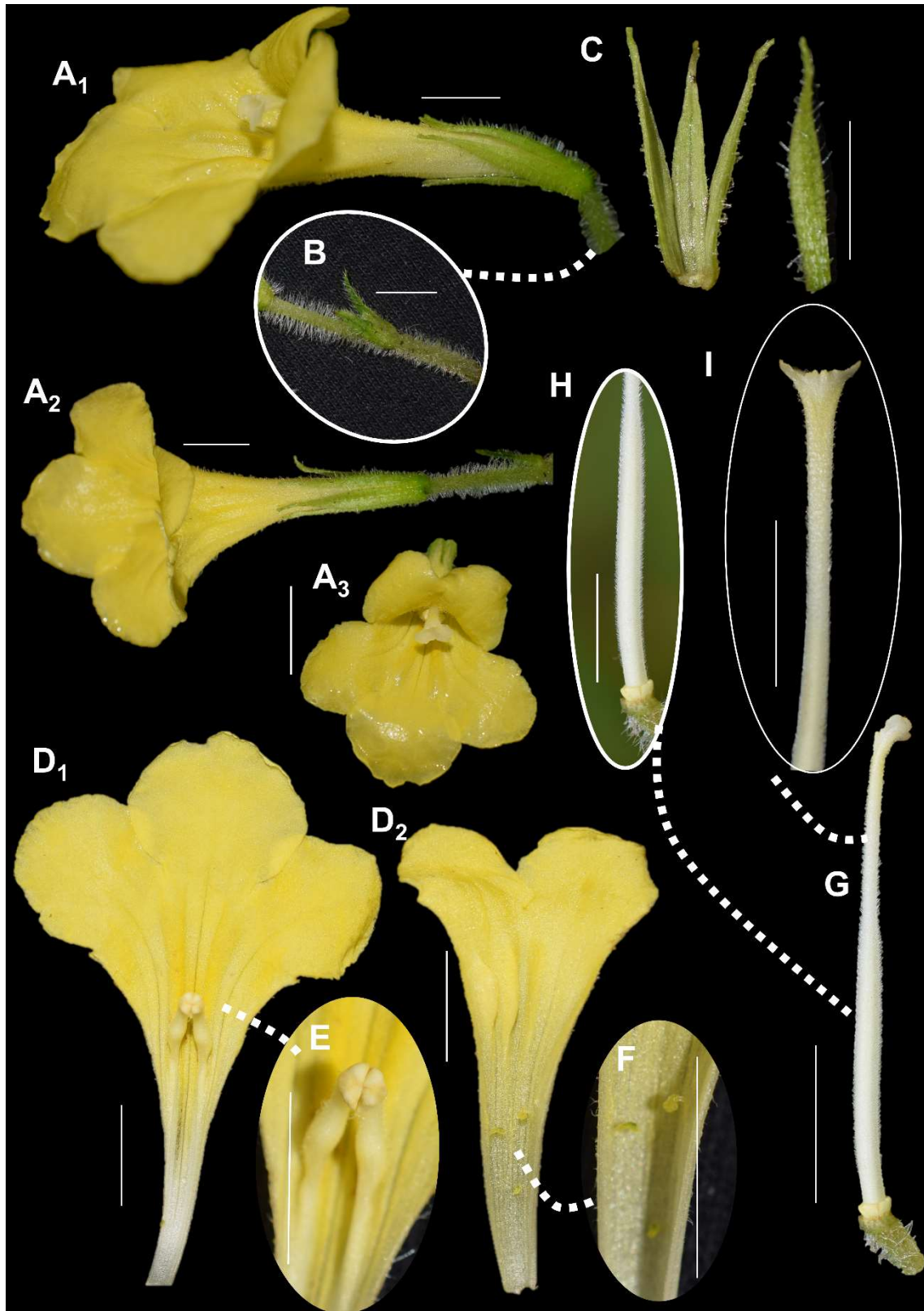


Fig. 1. *Henckelia flaviflora*. A. Habit, B<sub>1</sub>. Adaxial Surface of Leaf, B<sub>2</sub>. Abaxial Surface of Leaf, C. Stem and Capsule.



**Fig. 2.** *Henckelia flaviflora*, floral morphology. **A<sub>1</sub>**. Side view of the flower, **A<sub>2</sub>**. Top view of the flower, **A<sub>3</sub>**. Front view showing corolla lobes, **B**. Bracts and Peduncle, **C**. Outer and inner sides of the Calyx, **D<sub>1</sub>**. Lower lip of the dissected corolla showing stamens and ridges, **D<sub>2</sub>**. Upper lip of the dissected corolla showing staminodes and flaps, **E**. Closeup of stamens, **F**. Closeup of staminodes, **G**. Gynoecium, **H**. Closeup of the ovary, **I**. Stigma and Style. (All scalebars measure 1 cm).

**Table 1.** Comparison of morphological characters between *Henckelia flaviflora* and its similar species *H. xipingensis*.

| Characters     | <i>H. flaviflora</i>                               | <i>H. xipingensis</i>                    |
|----------------|--|--|
| Stolons        | Absent   | Present                                  |
| Leaf shape     | Elliptic to elliptic-lanceolate.                   | Ovate-elliptic to elliptic.              |
| Lateral nerves | 10–15 pairs  | 5–9 pairs                                |
| Petiole        | 1.5–5 cm   | 0.5–3.5 cm                               |
| Inflorescence  | 1–2 flowered                                       | 1–4 flowered                             |
| Peduncle       | c. 1.2 cm long                                     | 0.5–3.5 cm                               |
| Bracts         | Linear to narrowly lanceolate, 0.8–1.2 cm long.    | Linear to lanceolate, 0.3–0.6 cm long    |
| Calyx tube     | c. 0.5 cm long.                                    | 0.3–0.4 cm long.                         |
| Corolla tube   | Yellow, broadening towards the apex.               | Yellow, $\pm$ equal throughout.          |
| Filaments      | c. 0.5 cm long, straight, swollen, not geniculate. | 1.1–1.3 cm long, geniculate with a knee. |
| Staminodes     | 0.05–0.1 cm long.                                  | 0.2–0.6 cm long.                         |
| Ovary          | Densely pubescent                                  | Sparsely pubescent                       |

(See Table 1). Among the other species of *Henckelia* with yellow flowers, *H. flaviflora* can be distinguished based on its bracts that are linear or narrowly lanceolate and less than 1.2 cm long (vs foliaceous bracts more than 1 cm long in *H. hookeri* and *H. pathakii*), and densely pubescent calyx (vs glabrous and winged calyx in *H. siangensis*).

***Henckelia siyomensis*** Kishwan, T.U.Thackeray & N.V.Page, *sp. nov.* **Figs 3–4**

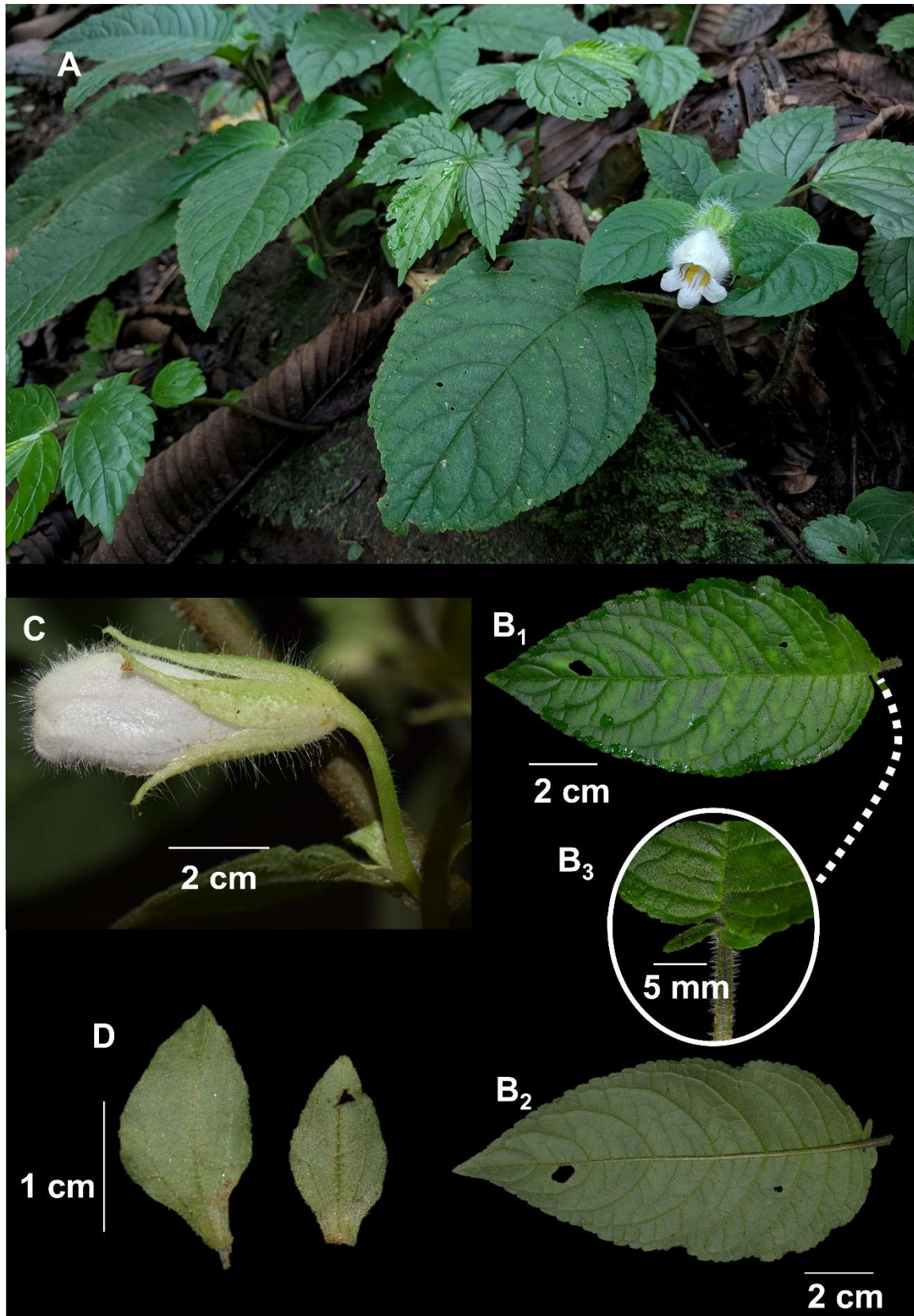
**Type:** INDIA, Arunachal Pradesh, Shi-Yomi District, Near Tato, 26 August 2025, N.V.Page & S. Kishwan 25826 (holotype BSD!; isotype DD!).

**Diagnosis:** *Henckelia siyomensis* is morphologically similar to *H. urticifolia* (Buch.-Ham. ex D.Don) A.Dietr with respect to its erect and caulescent habit, leaf indumentum, 1–2 flowered cymes, calyx shape, calyx indumentum and slightly geniculate fertile stamens. It can be distinguished from *H. urticifolia* (Fig. S1) based on the presence of stolons (vs lack of stolons in *H. urticifolia*), leaf like appendages on the petiole (vs. lack of leaf like appendages), corolla tube urceolate and widest at around 2 cm from the mouth (vs campanulate and widest at the mouth) and white with a few purple stripes and yellow ridges (vs. pink or purple with numerous reticulate maroon stripes and a yellow patch).

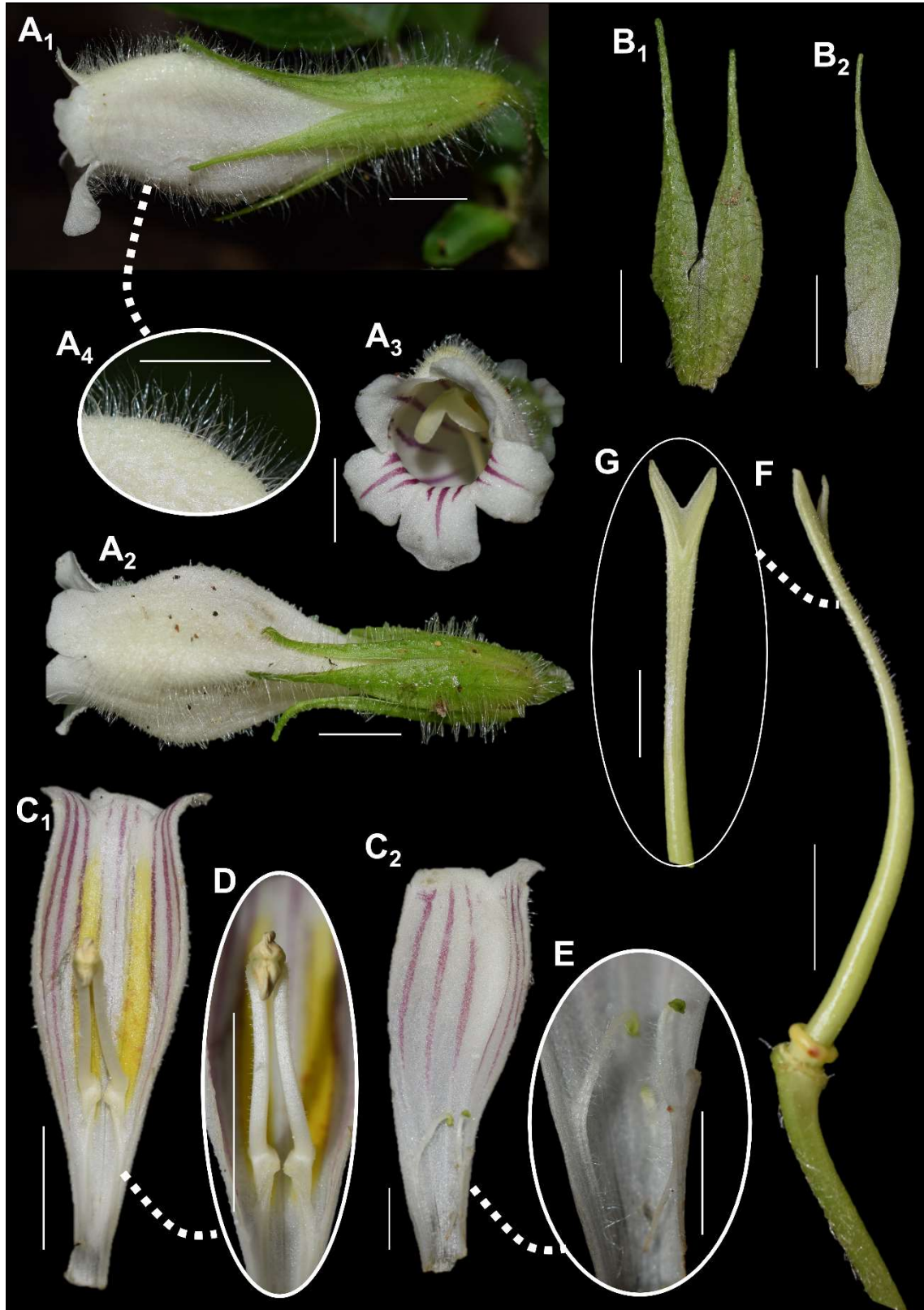
**Description:** Erect, caulescent, perennial, stoloniferous herbs. *Stolons* 50–75 cm long, producing new individuals at terminal nodes. *Stems*  $\pm$ succulent, up to 30 cm high, densely pilose near the apex, sparsely puberulous to glabrescent at the lower internodes. *Leaves* opposite, dark-green adaxially, paler abaxially, elliptic to elliptic-ovate, 9.5–15  $\times$  5.5–7.5 cm, base asymmetric, obliquely cordate, apex acute to shortly acuminate, margin crenate, sometimes  $\pm$ entire in the lower half, pubescent to pilose adaxially, densely pilose on the midrib and nerves abaxially; *midrib* impressed adaxially, prominent and raised abaxially, thinning towards the apex; *secondary nerves* 7–12 pairs, unequal when the leaf bases are oblique, impressed adaxially, raised abaxially, arcuate, thinning and meeting to form loops near the margin;

*petiole* 2–5 cm long,  $\pm$ angled, densely pilose, with a shallow channel adaxially, often with 2–4 leaf like appendages near the apex. *Inflorescence* axillary, 1–2 flowered; *peduncle* up to 4 cm long, densely pilose near the base, glabrous to sparsely pilose at the apex; *bracts* paired, free, sometimes unequal, inserted on lower half of the peduncle, foliaceous, elliptic to ovate-elliptic, 1.5–2  $\times$  0.7–1 cm, often asymmetric, 3-nerved, sparsely pilose abaxially and adaxially, especially on the midrib and the margin. *Calyx* 5-lobed, forming a campanulate tube, persistent; *tube* 1.2–1.5 cm long, densely pilose outside, glabrous inside; *lobes* narrowly lanceolate, 2.6–2.8 cm long, caudate-acuminate, with 3–5 faint nerves, densely pilose outside, glabrous inside. *Corolla* tubular, 2-lipped; *tube* c. 4.5 cm long, campanulate up to 1 cm from the base, curving upwards and broadening towards the mouth,  $\pm$ urceolate in the upper half, distinctly pouched dorsally, white with purple stripes and yellow longitudinal ridges on the lower lip inside, densely pilose outside, glabrous to sparsely glandular-pubescent inside; *lobes* 5, densely pilose outside, glabrous inside, 2 on the upper lip, white,  $\pm$ reniform, much broader than long, 0.5  $\times$  1 cm, 3 on the lower lip, white, each with 3 dark purple stripes, squarish, 1  $\times$  1 cm. *Fertile stamens* 2, inserted c. 1.5 cm from the base of the corolla; *filaments* c. 1.5 cm long, twisted and with a collar like ridge at up to c. 0.2 cm from the base, glandular pubescent; *anthers* c. 0.4 mm across, fused face to face, yellow, glabrous, beaked on the edges. *Staminodes* 3, unequal. *Lateral staminodes* 2, inserted c. 1.3 cm from the base of the corolla; *filaments* c. 0.6 cm, densely pilose; *anthers* green. *Central staminode* inserted c. 2 cm from the base of the corolla,  $\times$  0.1 cm long, filament very short, anthers green. *Disc* annular, c. 2 mm long, yellowish, glabrous. *Ovary* cylindrical, c. 2.3 cm long, 0.2–0.25 cm wide, light green, glabrous, or with a few hairs at the transition to the style; *stigma* chiritoid, upper lip very short, lower lip c. 1.2 cm across, bilobed with triangular or lanceolate lobes, densely pubescent; *style* linear, c. 1.5 cm, sparsely pilose. *Capsules* not seen.

**Habitat and Ecology:** *Henckelia siyomensis* is only known from one locality near Tato in Shi-Yomi district at



**Fig. 3.** *Henckelia siyomensis*. **A.** Habit, **B<sub>1</sub>**. Adaxial surface of the leaf, **B<sub>2</sub>**. Abaxial surface of the leaf, **B<sub>3</sub>**. Closeup of the leaf base and petiole showing the leaf-like appendages, **C.** Flower bud, **D.** Bracts.



**Fig. 4.** *Henckelia siyomensis*, floral morphology. **A<sub>1</sub>**. Side view of the flower, **A<sub>2</sub>**. Top view of the flower, **A<sub>3</sub>**. Front view showing corolla lobes, **A<sub>4</sub>**. Closeup of the corolla tube showing the pilose indumentum, **B<sub>1</sub>**. Outer surface of the Calyx, **B<sub>2</sub>**. Inner surface of the Calyx, **C<sub>1</sub>**. Lower lip of the dissected corolla showing stamens, **C<sub>2</sub>**. Upper lip of the dissected corolla showing staminodes, **D**. Closeup of stamens, **E**. Closeup of staminodes, **F**. Gynoecium, **G**. Stigma and Style. (All scalebars measure 1 cm).



**TABLE 2.** Comparison of morphological characters between *Henckelia siyomensis* and its morphologically similar species *H. adenocalyx*, and *H. urticifolia*.

| Characters    | <i>H. siyomensis</i>  | <i>H. adenocalyx</i>   | <i>H. urticifolia</i>   |
|---------------|---|--|---|
| Habit         | Herbs up to 30 cm tall.   | Robust herbs, up to 2 m tall.  | Herbs up to 50 cm tall.   |
| Stolons       | Present   | Absent   | Absent  |
| Leaf shape    | Elliptic to elliptic-ovate, base obliquely cordate.                                       | Elliptic to broadly ovate, base obliquely rounded or decurrent.  | Elliptic to ovate, base obliquely attenuate.  |
| Petiole       | 2–5 cm long with leaflike appendages at the apex.   | 1–6 cm long without appendages.  | 1–6 cm long without appendages.   |
| Calyx         | Membranous  | Coriaceous   | ±Coriaceous   |
| Calyx lobes   | Narrow lanceolate, caudate-acuminate, erect.  | Ovate-lanceolate, acuminate, erect to reflexed.  | Narrowly triangular, long attenuate, erect to reflexed.   |
| Corolla tube  | Urceolate at apex, widest at around 2 cm from the mouth, white with a few purple stripes. | Campanulate at apex, widest near the mouth, white, lemon yellow or purplish-pink with pink or maroon stripes inside. | Campanulate at apex, widest near the mouth, pink or purple with numerous reticulate maroon stripes. |
| Corolla lobes | White with a few purple stripes.  | White, lemon yellow or pink.   | Pink or Purple, with reticulate maroon stripes.   |
| Filaments     | White knees at geniculation.  | Red knees at geniculation.   | Yellowish knees at geniculation.  |
| Style         | c. 1.5 cm, sparsely pilose.   | 1.5–2 cm, pubescent.   | c. 2 cm, glandular pubescent.   |

around 1500 m a.s.l. It was found growing in moist and shady ravines, along the streamside. The presence of stolons in this species promotes a somewhat gregarious growth of this species within the ravine habitat, allowing it to spread across the forest floor.

**Conservation status:** A single population of around 100 individuals of *Henckelia siyomensis* is presently recorded from a single location. Until further surveys are carried out in the around the type-location, this species is provisionally assigned Data Deficient.

**Phenology:** Flowering in August-September.

**Etymology:** The species epithet refers to the Siyom river valley (Shi-Yomi District), from where the species is collected.

**Notes:** *Henckelia siyomensis* is characterized by its stolon bearing stems, foliaceous bracts, tubular calyx with densely pilose indumentum outside, caudate-acuminate calyx lobes, corolla densely pilose outside and urceolate near the mouth, white with purple stripes. The presence of foliaceous bracts, hairy calyx and 1–2 flowered cymes indicate its morphological similarity to *H. urticifolia* (discussed above), *H. hookeri* (C.B. Clarke) D.J. Middleton and Mich. Möller and *H. adenocalyx* (Chatterjee) D.J. Middleton and Mich. Möller. However, the presence of stolon, size and insertion of bracts, shape and indumentum of corolla can be used to easily recognize this taxon (Table 2).

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