New distribution records of *Begonia* L., *B. murina* Craib and *B. poilanei* Kiew (Begoniaceae: Cucurbitales) for Laos

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**Abstract:** *Begonia murina* Craib from central and *B. poilanei* Kiew from southern of Laos, are newly recorded in Laos. Based on Lao materials, detailed description, photographs, and notes on habitat, ecology, & taxonomic discussion of these two species compared with the Chinese, Thai, & Vietnamese types are provided.

**Keyword:** Bolaven plateau, description, flora of Laos, limestone karst, new record, taxonomic discussion.

*Begonia* L. (Begoniaceae) is one of the largest genera of angiosperms, comprising 1,989 accepted species (Hughes et al. 2015–). In Laos, 28 species have been recorded, nine of which are endemic (Ding et al. 2020; Lanorsavanh et al. 2020; Souvannakhoummane et al. 2020). The limestone karst in Laos is interesting for plant diversity, and several new species of *Begonia* were described, including *B. cladotricha* M. Hughes (Hughes 2007); *B. viscosa* Aver. & H.Q. Nguyen (Averyanov & Nguyen 2012); *B. khammouanensis* Souvann. & Lamxay; *B. hinamnoensis* Souvann. & Lanors. (Souvannakhoummane et al. 2018); *B. tatianae* Aver; *B. quadripetiolata* Aver. & H.Q. Nguyen (Averyanov et al. 2019).

During our field surveys in Khammouan and Bolikhamsay provinces, central Laos in June–August 2019 & July–August 2020, and Champasak province, southern Laos in September 2020, we found two species of *Begonia* that morphologically placed in sect. *Diploclinium* (Lindl.) A.DC. after carefully checking relevant literature and comparing with herbarium specimens: FOF, HNL and KAG, as well as online specimen data and images of type available at Begonia Resource Centre (Hughes et al. 2015–). The first species...
was identified as *Begonia murina* Craib, which can be recognized by small globose tuber and glandular hairs indumentum in all parts, red striation on ovary and fruit, these features had been known only in Thailand (Phutthai et al. 2019). The second species is *B. poilanei* Kiew which is characterized by elongated cylindrical tuber and known from southern Vietnam and China (Kiew 2007; Tian 2014; Peng et al. 2014). We here report these two taxa as new to the flora of Laos, along with their description based on Lao materials, photographs, distribution map. Consequently, the diversity of *Begonia* in Laos is increased to 30 species. The descriptions were made based on the living plants, alcohol preserved and herbarium specimens. The terminology follows Phutthai et al. (2019).

*Begonia murina* Craib  
(Figure 1, Image 1)


Monoecious rhizomatous lithophytic herb, up to 15 cm tall. *Rhizome* tuber, small globose, smooth, light red to reddish brown, 3–5 mm in diameter, with many additional fibrous roots. Stemless or very short to 1 cm long, reddish, pilose. Leaves 3–5 per plant; petiole 5–9 cm long, 2–3 mm in diam., reddish, puberulous; blade asymmetric, ovate to lanceolate, 5–6 × 8–9 cm, apex acute, base cordate, margin dentate, covered with sparse short hairs, veins 4–5 per side, puberulous on both sides, adaxial surface green, abaxial surface paler. Inflorescence axillary near terminal cyme; peduncle erect, 6–10 cm long, puberulent, branched 2 times, with 2–4 male flowers and 1–2 female flowers per branch; bracts narrowly lanceolate, ca. 7 × 3 mm, membranous, reddish, slightly glandular hairy, margin fringed by glandular hairs. Staminate flower: pedicel 1.5–2.5 cm long, covered with glandular hairs, tepals 4, white, unequal, outer 2, broadly ovate, 10–12 × 14–15 mm, glandular hairy on the outer surface, margin entire covered with glandular hairs, inner 2, much smaller, elliptic to ob lanceolate, white, 5–8 × 1.5–2 mm, glabrous inside, puberulous outside, margin entire, ciliate with glandular hairs; stamens bright yellow, 40–56, anther obovate, ca. 2 mm long. Pistillate flower: pedicel 1–1.2 cm long, glandular hairy, tepals 2 or 3, white, equal, outer 2, broadly ovate, 6–10 × 10–12 mm, covered with glandular hairs on the outer surface; inner 1 narrowly elliptic, ca. 6 × 2 mm. Ovary 3-locular, pale green with red striations, placentaes axial, placentaes 2 per locule, styles 3, stigmas bifid with twisted bands, golden yellow. Capsule green with reddish line reticulate, brown when dry, with 3 subequal wings, abaxial wing 7–8 mm long, lateral wings shorter, 6–7 mm long. Seeds numerous, ellipsoid, ca. 0.3 mm long, light brown.

**Distribution**: Laos (Bolikhhamxay, Khammouan), Thailand.

**Ecology and Phenology**: In Laos, this species was found on wet rock with mosses near streams in dry evergreen forest at elevation 1,034 m (Bolikhhamxay Province) and on shade cliffs of limestone karst, associated with *Paraboea* sp. (Gesneriaceae), *Amorphophalus* sp. (Araceae) and some species of limestone ferns at elevation ca. 210 m (Khammouan Province). Flowering from August to September and fruiting from August to September.


**Vernacular**: ບ້ານໄວງ [Somkoung Khon] meaning hairy begonia

**Note**: *Begonia murina* Craib was originally described based on the plants collected from Kanchanaburi provinces, Thailand by Craib (1928), and formerly believed to be endemic to Thailand, being found in Sukhothai and Kanchanaburi (Phutthai et al. 2019). In Laos, it is known from Bolikhhamxay and Khammouan provinces between 210–1,034 m elevations. Though Lao plants shows slight differences in leaf shape (oblique-cordiform vs. usually reniform) and colour of veins (usually green vs. reddish green), we consider these are included within the infraspecific variation of this species.

*Begonia poilanei* Kiew  
(Figure 1, Image 2)

Monoecious rhizomatous lithophytic herb, 5–15 cm tall. *Rhizome* tuber, cylindrical, smooth, light brown, 2–4 cm long, 5–8 mm in diameter. Stem short, 0.5–3 cm long, reddish green, pilose; branched from lower nodes. Stipule narrowly triangular, ca. 5 mm long, covered with white hairs. Leaves 2(–5) per plant; petiole 5–6(–10) cm long, 2–3 mm in diameter, reddish green, puberulous; blade obliquely cordate, 6–7 × 7–9 cm, apex acute-lanceolate or aristate, tip 1–1.5 cm long, base cordate, margin serrate with ciliate, puberulous on both sides, adaxial surface green, except venation which is dark green and impressed, leaf abaxial surface paler, and reddish-green or red in veins, veins 3–4 pair per side, prominent on abaxial side. Inflorescence axillary and terminal cyme; peduncle erect, 6–15 cm long, 2–3 mm in diameter, covered with short hairs, usually with 2 branches, with female flower more than male flowers per branch, floral bracts hirsute, ovate, 4–6 × ca. 3 mm, membranous, reddish-green. Staminate flower: pedicel red to pinkish-red, 1–1.8 cm long, ca. 1 mm in diameter, pubescent; tepals 4, pink or bright pink, outer 2 larger, broadly ovate, 7–8 × 9–10 mm, with 9 distinct radial
New distribution records of two Begonia species for Laos

Phonepaseuth et al.

stripes on adaxial surface with glandular hairy on the outer surface especially on margin entire, inner 2, much smaller, elliptic to oblanceolate, lighter in color, 5–8 × 2–3 mm, stamens bright yellow, 28–36, anther obovate, ca. 2 mm long. Pistillate flower: pedicel pink or pinkish red, 1–1.2 cm long, globous, tepals 3, pink, unequal, outer 2, broadly ovate, 7–8 × 8–10 mm, with 9 distinct radial stripes on adaxial surface, covered with glandular hairs on the midrib of outer surface, inner 1, elliptic, ca. 1.5 × 3 mm, ovary 3-locular, pinkish green, shiny, placentae axial, placentae 2 per locule, styles 3, stigmas bifid, golden yellow. Capsule unequally 3-winged, abaxial wing oblong, 7–8 mm long, lateral wings shorter, 4–5 mm long. Seeds not seen.

Distribution: China, Laos (Bolaven Plateau), Vietnam.

Ecology and Phenology: In Laos, this species is known only from on top of the Bolaven Plateau, Paksong District, Champasak Province at 1,270 m elevation.

Image 1. Begonia murina Craib: A and B—Habitat and habit | C—Leaf adaxial surface (left) and leaf abaxial surface (right) | D—Tubers | E—Inflorescence | F—Staminate flower and stamens | G—Pistillate flowers and pistil | H—Mature fruit | I—Cross-sections of capsule. © P. Phonepaseuth from P002 (FOF).
Flowering and fruiting in September.

Specimens examined: L3949 (BKF, FOF!, KAG), 17.ix.2020, 15.060N, 106.208E, 1,277 m elevation, Dong Hua Sao National Protected Area, Bolaven Plateau, Paksong District, Champasak Province, Laos, coll. Souladeth P., Phonepaseuth P., Souvannakhounmane K., & Vongthavone T.

Type: 19824 (holo P [P00539147], digital image!, iso [P00539160, P00539161], digital image!), 21.x.1931, Djijuil Haut Donai District, Vietnam, Poilane E.; TDK710,
New distribution records of two Begonia species for Laos

Phonepaseuth et al.


Vernacular: ບົມກຸ້ງກຳມະຈອນ (Somkoung Kammajon [meaning blood veins])

Note: Begonia poilanei Kiew was first described from Vietnam, Haut Donai District, Dijuih (Dalat) by Kiew in 2007, and named in honor of E. Poilane, who first discovered and collected this species in 1931. Formerly this species was stated as endemic to Vietnam. Peng et al. (2014) described Begonia wuzhishanensis C.-I Peng, X.H. Jin & S.M. Ku from Wuzhishan City, Hainan Province, China, and Tian et al. (2014) also described B. intermedia D.K. Tian & Y.H. Yan, from another city in Hainan Province in the same year, but both of them are now treated as a synonym of Begonia poilanei Kiew in Nomenclature of Begonia (Hughes et al. 2015–). In Laos, thus far this species is known only in one locality on the top plateau of Bolaven Plateau in Champasak Province. Lao plants have minor different from Vietnamese type specimen in its leaf apex: tip aristate (vs. acute).

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Articles

Roosting habits and habitats of the Indian Flying Fox Pteropus medius Temminck, 1825 in the northern districts of Tamil Nadu, India
– M. Pandian & S. Suresh, Pp. 19675–19688

Diversity and distribution of avifauna at Waratthenna-Hakkinda Environmental Protection Area in Kandy, Sri Lanka
– Dinelka Thilakarathne, Tithira Lakkan, Gayan Hirimuthugoda, Chaminda Wijesundara & Shalika Kumburegama, Pp. 19689–19701

Grass species composition in tropical forest of southern India
– M. Ashokkumar, S. Swaminathan & R. Nagarajan, Pp. 19702–19713

Communications

Habitat use and conservation threats to Wild Water Buffalo Bubalus arnee (Mammalia: Artiodactyla: Bovidae) in Koshi Tappu Wildlife Reserve, Nepal
– Reeta Khulal, Bijaya Neupane, Bijaya Dhami, Siddhartha Regmi, Ganesh Prasad Tiwari & Manita Parajuli, Pp. 19714–19724

Get my head around owls: people perception and knowledge about owls of Andaman Islands
– Shanmugavel Sureshmarimuthu, Santhanakrishnan Babu, Nagaraj Rajeshkumar & Honnavalli Nagaraj Kumara, Pp. 19725–19732

Abundance and diversity of threatened birds in Nagal Wetland, Punjab, India
– Rajwinder Kaur & Onkar Singh Briaich, Pp. 19733–19742

Evaluation of fish diversity and abundance in the Kabul River with comparisons between reaches above and below Kabul City, Afghanistan
– Ugyen Kelzang, Ahmad Farid Habibi & Ryan J. Thoni, Pp. 19743–19752

New record of Myrmarachne melancephala MacLeay, 1839 (Araneae: Salticidae) from Ichhapur, India and biogeographical implications of the co-occurrence of its ant model Tetraponera rufonigra Jordan, 1851
– Rahul Kumar, Miritunjay Sharma & Ajay Kumar Sharma, Pp. 19753–19761

Diversity of spiders (Arachnida: Araneae) and the impact of pruning in Indian sandalwood plantations from Karnataka, India

New records of cheilostome Bryozoa from the eastern coast of India encroasting on the exoskeleton of live horseshoe crabs of Indian Sundarbans
– Swati Das, Maria Susan Sanjay, Basudev Tripathy, C. Venkatraman & K.A. Subramanian, Pp. 19773–19780

On the pteridophytes of Bherjan-Borajian-Padumoni Wildlife Sanctuary, Assam, India
– Pranjal Borah & Jayanta Barukial, Pp. 19781–19790

Population status of Heritiera fomes Buch.-Ham., a threatened species from Mahanadi Mangrove Wetland, India
– Sudam Charan Sahu, Manas Ranjan Mohanta & N.H. Ravindranath, Pp. 19791–19798

Additions to the lichenized and lichenicolous fungi of Jammu & Kashmir from Andaman Islands
– Pranjal Borah & Jayanta Barukial, Pp. 19781–19790

Notes

A recent sighting of the Stripe-backed Weasel Mustela strigidorsa (Mammalia: Carnivora: Mustelidae) in Hkakabo Razi Landscape, Myanmar

A recent sighting of the Indian Flying Fox Pteropus medius Temminck, 1825 in a Jaguar (Mammalia: Carnivora: Felidae), survivor of gunshot wounds

New distribution records of B. poilanei (Begoniaceae: Cucurbitales) for Laos
– Prayash Chettri, Yuki Matsui, Hideshi Naka & Archana Tiwari, Pp. 19837–19848

New distribution records of B. poilanei (Begoniaceae: Cucurbitales) for Laos
– Prayash Chettri, Yuki Matsui, Hideshi Naka & Archana Tiwari, Pp. 19837–19848

Additions to the lichenized and lichenicolous fungi of Jammu & Kashmir from Andaman Islands
– Sudam Charan Sahu, Manas Ranjan Mohanta & N.H. Ravindranath, Pp. 19791–19798

Additional distribution records of Indigofera santapaui (Leguminosae: Papilionoideae) from the states of Maharashtra and Gujarat, India
– Kumar Vinod Chhotupuri Gosavi, Sanjay Gajanan Auti, Sharad Suresh Kambale & Munivenkatappa Sanjappa, Pp. 19870–19873

Further record of the orb-weaving spider Araneus tubulobimarius Zhu & Zhang, 1993 (Araneae: Araneidae) from India

The genus Catapiestus Perty, 1831 (Coleoptera: Tenebrionidae: Cnodalonini) from Arunachal Pradesh with one new record to India
– Nehru Prabakaran, Anoop Raj Singh & Vedagiri Thirumurugan, Pp. 19860–19863

Rediscovery and extended distribution of Indigofera santapaui Sanjappa (Leguminosae: Papilionoideae) from the states of Maharashtra and Gujarat, India
– Kumar Vinod Chhotupuri Gosavi, Sanjay Gajanan Auti, Sharad Suresh Kambale & Munivenkatappa Sanjappa, Pp. 19870–19873

Notes on the extended distribution of Impatiens malayarum, a recently described balsam in Western Ghats, India
– Anoop P. Balan & A.J. Robi, Pp. 19878–19883

Book Review

A look over on the scented tree of India (Santalum album)
– S. Suress Ramanan & A. Arunachalam, Pp. 19884–19888

Communications

Habitat use and conservation threats to Wild Water Buffalo Bubalus arnee (Mammalia: Artiodactyla: Bovidae) in Koshi Tappu Wildlife Reserve, Nepal
– Reeta Khulal, Bijaya Neupane, Bijaya Dhami, Siddhartha Regmi, Ganesh Prasad Tiwari & Manita Parajuli, Pp. 19714–19724

Get my head around owls: people perception and knowledge about owls of Andaman Islands
– Shanmugavel Sureshmarimuthu, Santhanakrishnan Babu, Nagaraj Rajeshkumar & Honnavalli Nagaraj Kumara, Pp. 19725–19732

Abundance and diversity of threatened birds in Nagal Wetland, Punjab, India
– Rajwinder Kaur & Onkar Singh Briaich, Pp. 19733–19742

Evaluation of fish diversity and abundance in the Kabul River with comparisons between reaches above and below Kabul City, Afghanistan
– Ugyen Kelzang, Ahmad Farid Habibi & Ryan J. Thoni, Pp. 19743–19752

New record of Myrmarachne melancephala MacLeay, 1839 (Araneae: Salticidae) from Ichhapur, India and biogeographical implications of the co-occurrence of its ant model Tetraponera rufonigra Jordan, 1851
– Rahul Kumar, Miritunjay Sharma & Ajay Kumar Sharma, Pp. 19753–19761

Diversity of spiders (Arachnida: Araneae) and the impact of pruning in Indian sandalwood plantations from Karnataka, India

New records of cheilostome Bryozoa from the eastern coast of India encroasting on the exoskeleton of live horsehose crabs of Indian Sundarbans
– Swati Das, Maria Susan Sanjay, Basudev Tripathy, C. Venkatraman & K.A. Subramanian, Pp. 19773–19780

On the pteridophytes of Bherjan-Borajian-Padumoni Wildlife Sanctuary, Assam, India
– Pranjal Borah & Jayanta Barukial, Pp. 19781–19790

Population status of Heritiera fomes Buch.-Ham., a threatened species from Mahanadi Mangrove Wetland, India
– Sudam Charan Sahu, Manas Ranjan Mohanta & N.H. Ravindranath, Pp. 19791–19798

Additions to the lichenized and lichenicolous fungi of Jammu & Kashmir from Kshithwar High Altitude National Park
– Vishal Kumar, Yash Pal Sharma, Siljo Joseph, Roshini Kumar Nangom & Sanjeeva Nayaka, Pp. 19799–19807

Short Communications

Is release of rehabilitated wildlife with embedded lead ammunition advisable? Plumbism in a Jaguar Panthera Onca (Mammalia: Carnivora: Felidae), survivor of gunshot wounds

New record of the Sewing Needle Zipper Loach Paracanthocobitis inyapha Singer & Page, 2015 (Teleostei: Cypriniformes: Nemacheilidae) from the Chindwin drainage of Manipur, India
– Yunnam Rameshori, Yongkoum Chilingma & Waikom Vishwanath, Pp. 19813–19817

Field identification characters to diagnose Microhyla mukhlesuri from closely related M. myrmensinghensis (Amphibia: Microhylidae) and range extension of M. mukhlesuri up to West Bengal State, India
– Suman Pratihar & Kaushik Deut, Pp. 19818–19823