



Amomum kingii var. *oblongum* (Zingiberaceae): a new variety from Sikkim Himalaya

V.P. THOMAS¹, V.A. MUHAMMED NISSAR² & M. SABU³

¹Department of Botany, Catholicate College, Pathanamthitta, Kerala- 689 645, India. E-mail: amomum@gmail.com

²Indian Council of Agricultural Research Complex for North-East Hill Region, Shillong, Meghalaya, India

³Department of Botany, University of Calicut, Kerala- 673 635, India. E-mail: msabu9@gmail.com

Abstract

Amomum kingii var. *oblongum*, a new variety from Sikkim is described and illustrated. A detailed description, data on distribution, ecology and an illustration are provided.

Introduction

The pantropical Zingiberaceae is the largest family in the order Zingiberales with 53 genera and more than 1377 species (Kong *et al.* 2010). In India, the members of the genus *Amomum* with about 22 species (Thomas *et al.* 2010:295) are mainly distributed in North-East India, Peninsular India and the Andaman-Nicobar Islands (Thomas & Sabu 2012:313). The recent explorations in various parts of India have added some more members of *Amomum* (Thomas *et al.* 2009a:13; Thomas *et al.* 2009b:25; Thomas, *et al.* 2010: 295; Thomas *et al.* 2012a: 99; Thomas & Sabu 2012: 313; Thomas *et al.* 2012b:549; Thomas *et al.* 2013a:561; Thomas *et al.* 2013b:321; Thomas *et al.* 2014:122) and raised the total number of taxa to 28 in India.

Amomum kingii Baker was first described by Baker in Hooker (1892:241) based on King's collection from Sikkim-Himalaya. Subsequently, Schumann (1904:241) included it as a distinct species with a remark on the uncertainty of its occurrence, and adopted the description of Baker. Recently, Thomas & Sabu (2015:7034) rediscovered this species from Sikkim after a lapse of a century. During the field exploration in Sikkim, an interesting specimen allied to *A. kingii* was collected from Pangthang, East Sikkim. On critical examination it turned out to be new variety of *A. kingii* and is described and illustrated here. The new variety shows remarkable differences from *A. kingii* in many characters (Fig. 1 & Fig. 2, Table 1).

TABLE 1. Comparison between *A. kingii* and *Amomum kingii* var. *oblongum*.

Attributes	<i>A. kingii</i>	<i>A. kingii</i> var. <i>oblongum</i>
Leafy sheath	maroon coloured	green with pale pink margins
Inflorescence	13–25 cm long, flowers compactly arranged	25–50 cm long, flowers laxly arranged
Sheathing bracts	ovate, 5–7 cm long	oblong to oblanceolate, 9–13 cm long
Bracteoles	variously shaped, 0.2–0.3 × 0.2–0.3 cm	lanceolate, 0.8–1.2 × 0.1–0.2 cm
Labellum	labellum obovate, obscurely 3-lobed, 3–3.5 cm long with legible pink radiating strands	labellum oblong, 3-lobed, 3.8–4.5 cm long with spreading pink design at centre
Fruits	globose, red tinged, 2.4–2.7 cm long	oblong, pale pink, 3.8–4.5 cm long

Amomum kingii var. *oblongum* V.P. Thomas & M. Sabu, var. nov. (Fig. 2 & 3)

Similar to *Amomum kingii* Baker (1892:241) but differs from it in having oblong spikes (25–50 cm long), laxly arranged flowers, green coloured pseudostem sheath with pale pink margins, oblong to oblanceolate (9–13 cm long) sheathing bracts, lanceolate bracteoles and oblong (3.8–4.5 cm long) fruits. Other minor differences are given in Table 1.

Type:—INDIA. Sikkim: East Sikkim District, Pangthang, alt. 1890 m, 7 May 2007, V.P. Thomas & V.A. Muhammed Nissar 95501 (holotype CALI!, isotype CAL!).