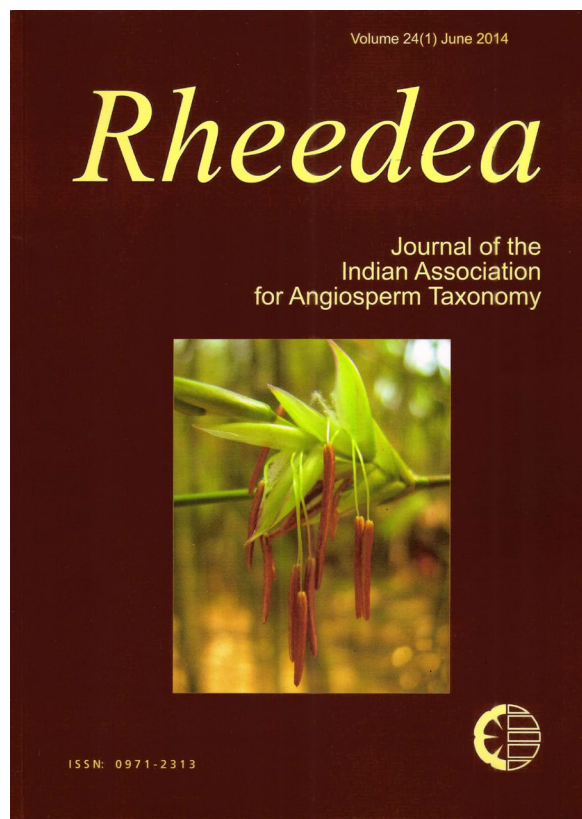




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Oberonia griffithiana (Orchidaceae), a New Record for Andaman and Nicobar Islands, India

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Abstract

Oberonia griffithiana Lindl., endemic to Himalayas and North-East India, Myanmar and Thailand is collected first time from Andaman and Nicobar Islands, India. Detailed description, distribution and photographs are provided.

Keywords: Orchid, *Oberonia griffithiana*, Andaman Islands, India

Introduction

Oberonia Lindl. is a widely distributed Old world genus comprising c. 300–350 species (Misra, 2007). This genus is represented in India, by 68 taxa (Ansari & Balakrishnan, 1990; Misra, 2007; Ratheesh Narayanan *et al.*, 2010), of which 29 are endemic. *O. griffithiana* is found in India, Myanmar and Thailand. In India this species was first reported by Seidenfaden and Arora (1982) in the work of enumeration of the Orchids of the North-Western Himalaya based on the collection of Arora from Baram-Maithli, Pithoragarh district, Uttarakhand and this specimen is housed in BSD, Dehra Dun. Deva and Naithani (1986) also reported its presence in North-West Himalaya based on Arora's collection. Rao (2007) reported occurrence of this species in Nagaland. However, Ansari and Balakrishnan (1990) who published a monograph on the genus *Oberonia* opined the species distribution doubtful in India.

During the recent floristic explorations in Middle Andaman Islands, the authors collected specimens of the genus *Oberonia* and after critical examination and matching with isotype (K000974201) identified it as *O. griffithiana*. With the present report, the genus *Oberonia* is now represented by three species in Andaman and Nicobar Islands, viz., *Oberonia ensiformis* (Sm.) Lindl., *O. mucronata* (D. Don) Ormerod and Seidenf. (Pandey & Diwakar, 2008) and *O. griffithiana* Lindl. A detailed description and photographs of the species are provided.

***Oberonia griffithiana* Lindl.**, Sert. Orchid. t. 8 B. 1838; Hook. f., Fl. Brit. India 5: 676. 1888; S. Misra, Orchids India 309. 2007; Seidenf. & Arora, Nordic J. Bot 2: 22. 1982; Deva & H.B. Naithani, Orchid Fl. N.W. Himalaya 329. t. 186. 1986; A.N. Rao, Bull. Arunachal For. Res. 23: 24. 2007. **Fig. 1**

Epiphytic herbs, up to 15 cm high, caulescent. Roots many, greyish-white, smooth, slender, terete, c. 0.8 mm thick. Stems short, compressed; internodes c. 1 cm long. Leaves not articulate, alternate, distichous, fleshy, sessile, falcate, linear, c. 4 × 3 mm, acute at apex, sheathing at base. Inflorescence terminal, longer than the leaves, slender, subcylindric, 10–4 cm long, in spikes; peduncle short, compressed, 0.5–0.8 mm thick, with few sheathing sterile bracts; spike 8–12 cm long, many-flowered, flowers in verticils. Floral bracts as long as or longer than the pedicel with ovary, yellow, sheathing, oblong-lanceolate, 2–2.2 × c. 0.6 mm, acuminate, veinless. Pedicel with ovary, light yellow, straight, slightly ribbed, 1.8–2 mm long, c. 0.4 mm thick. Flowers small, yellowish-brick red, 1.8–2 mm across, widely opening. Sepals subequal, deflexed, veinless; dorsal sepal ovate or ovate-elliptic, 0.9–1 × c. 0.5 mm, acute, entire; lateral sepals obliquely oblong-ovate, 0.8–0.9 × c. 0.4 mm, acuminate. Petals slightly falcate, obovate or spatulate, 0.9–1 × c. 0.4 mm, rounded, margins serrate or dentate-serrate, veinless. Lip superior, antrose, spreading, sessile, deeply concave at

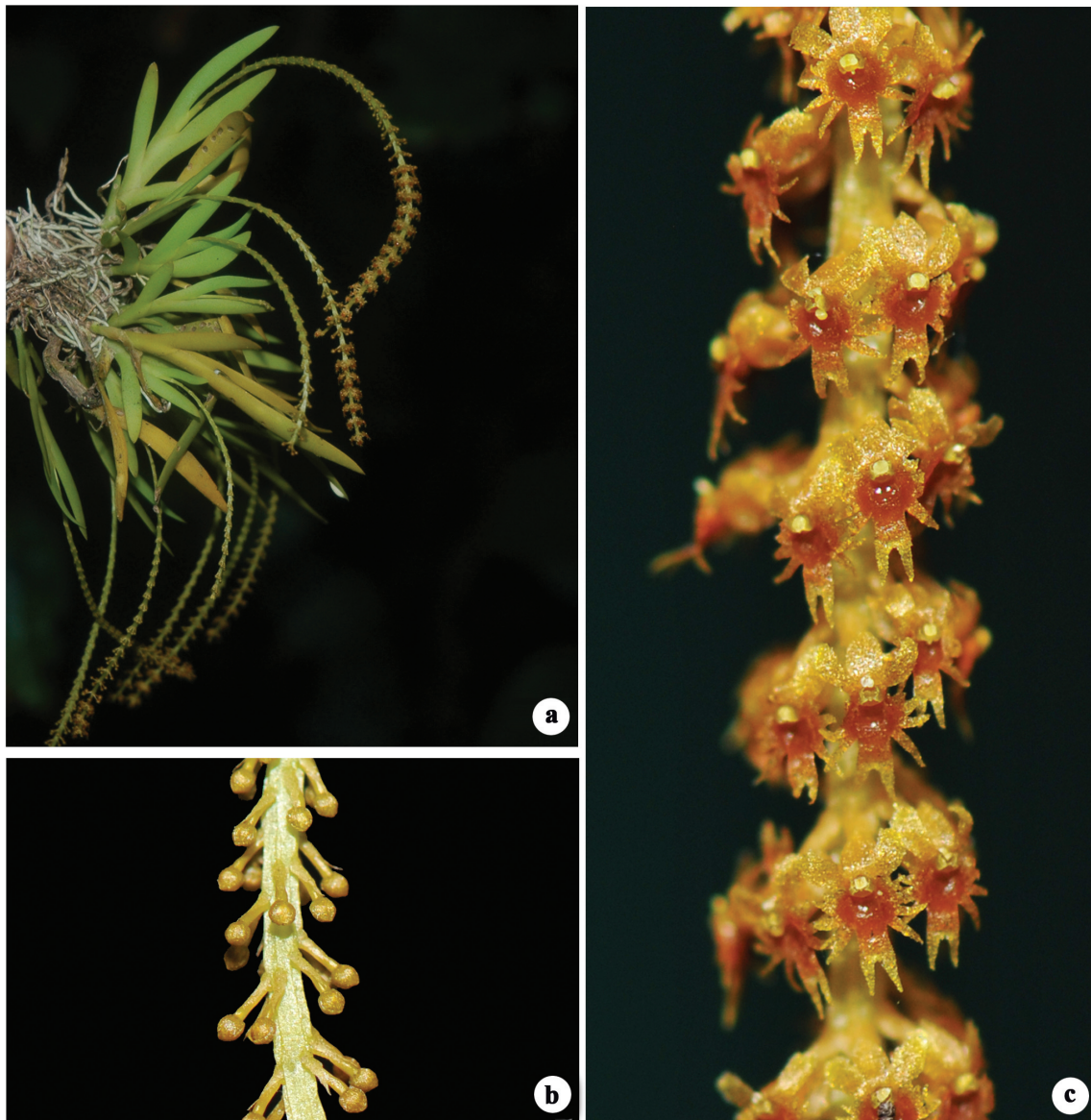


Fig. 1. *Oberonia griffithiana* Lindl.: **a.** Habit; **b.** flower buds; **d.** A portion of the inflorescence.

base, ovate in outline, 1–1.2 mm long, 1.6–1.8 mm across at side lobes, 3-lobed; side lobes spreading, their margins deeply lacerate, their apices acute and pointing forwards; midlobe transversely oblong, subentire, broadly 2-lobuled; lobules diverging, linear or oblong-linear, *c.* 0.6 mm long, acute, sub entire; disc indistinct. Column short, yellowish, stout, subglobose or cylindrical, *c.* 0.4 × 0.4 mm, without foot. Stigma short, suborbicular, *c.* 0.1 × 0.1 mm; rostellum minute, like a triangular protuberance. Anther terminal, light yellow, short, incumbent, subquadrate, *c.* 0.2 × 0.2 mm, with a short truncate front edges; pollinia 4, in subequal pairs, yellow, subglobose, *c.* 0.2 × 0.2 mm.

Flowering: November – December.

Habitat: Very rare, found growing on densely moss covered tree trunks of *Mangifera andamanica* King in evergreen forest at an elevation of 30 – 60 m.

Specimens examined: INDIA, **Andaman and Nicobar Islands**, Middle Andamans, Kousalyanagar, 15.12.2012, K. Prasad & M. Bheemalingappa 44450 (SKU).

Distribution: India (Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Nagaland, Uttarakhand); Myanmar and Thailand.

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