Note

Crepidium aphyllum (Orchidaceae), a new record from Bhutan

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The generic name *Crepidium* Bl. is derived from the Greek 'krepidion', which means “little boot” referring to the saccate base of labellum (Blume 1825; Pridgeon et al. 2006). It is a large genus containing 280–292 species distributed from tropical and subtropical Asia to the Pacific region (Pridgeon et al. 2006; Govaerts et al. 2019). Of these, four *Crepidium* species are known to occur in Bhutan: *C. acuminatum* (D.Don) Szlach.—listed as *Malaxis acuminata* (Pearce & Cribb 2002); *C. khasianum* (Hook.f.) Szlach. and *C. purpureum* (Lindl.) Szlach.—listed as *Malaxis khasiana* and *M. purpurea* (Gurung 2006), and *C. josephianum* (Rchb.f.) Marg. (National Biodiversity Centre 2017).

During a recent field exploration in 2019, the first author discovered a few scattered plants of an unidentified leafless orchid growing along with another orchid, *Anthogonium gracile* Wall. ex Lindl. on moss and soil covered rock outcrops. The observation was made at moist oak forest (1,565m elevation) in Galing, Shongphu Gewog, Trashigang District, eastern Bhutan. After a careful investigation of the collected materials (i.e., plants and flowers), it was identified as *C. aphyllum* (King & Pantl.) A.N.Rao by the second author. *Crepidium aphyllum* is a new record for the Bhutanese orchid flora, and with this record the number of species under this genus goes up to five in Bhutan. A brief description of the plant and its biology is presented with photographs. A voucher specimen has been deposited at National Herbarium Center, Thimphu, Bhutan for future reference.

**Enumeration of the species**

*Crepidium aphyllum* (King & Pantl.) A.N. Rao  

Type: India, Sikkim, Teesta Valley, 305m, 11 July 1896, Pantling No. 455 (K000387669) (K!).

Small leafless, probably partly-mycoheterotrophic, terrestrial or lithophytic herb, 7–15 cm tall, bearing flowers on the upper 1/3rd of the inflorescence. Roots very short and very few, vermiform. Pseudobulbs or corms, cylindric-ovate with irregular surface, erect or slightly inclined, white, rough surfaced, 1.0–2.5 cm long, 0.5–0.8 cm wide. Scape arising from apex of subterranean pseudobulbs or corms, sheathed towards the lower end with 3–5 scarious scales. Inflorescence racemose, open flowers laxly placed, buds (unopened) densely placed. Pedicel and ovary 1.6–2.0 mm long, 0.3mm wide, ribbed. Floral bracts lanceolate, deflexed, acuminate, 1.0–2.0 mm long, 0.5mm wide. Flowers...
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Endangered globally, which seemed to be incorrect due to the occurrence of this species in at least two countries and four locations. With this rate of encounter the estimated number of mature individuals throughout its distribution range including the five known current locations cannot be more than 500. In this whole area, there is a major threat of habitat degradation due to forest loss. This is a partial mycoheterotrophic plant which are very specific to its mycorrhizal symbiosis and hence to their habitats (Jacquemyn et al. 2016). Based on current information, previous assessment and following IUCN Standards and Petitions Committee (2019) guidelines, this can be assessed as Vulnerable (VU-D2).

References


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