

NEW DESCRIPTIONS

A NEW SPECIES OF *VACCINIUM* L. (ERICACEAE) FROM INDIA¹S. PANDA^{2,3} & M. SANJAPPA^{2,4}¹Accepted October 03, 2006²Botanical Survey of India, CGO Complex, 3rd MSO Building, Block-F, 5th Floor, Sector I, Salt Lake City, Kolkata 700 064, West Bengal, India.³Present address: P.G Department of Botany, Barasat Government College, Barasat 700 124, North 24 – Parganas, West Bengal, India. Email: subhaeri@yahoo.com⁴Email: m.sanjappa@nic.in

Vaccinium myodianum Panda & Sanjappa (Ericaceae) is described as new from Dibang Valley district of Arunachal Pradesh in India. The new species is also provided with illustration and probable affinities of its close allies.

Key words: *Vaccinium myodianum* sp. nov., Ericaceae, Dibang Valley district, Arunachal Pradesh

INTRODUCTION

The genus *Vaccinium* L. consists of about 450 species (Mabberley 1997), distributed in tropical Asia, Europe, south-eastern Africa, Madagascar and America. Of these, about 28 species are reported to occur in India (Panda 2006), distributed in the eastern Himalaya, north-eastern India (except Tripura) and hill tops of south-western Ghats.

Sleumer (1941) reported 33 sections in the genus, of which the Indian taxa represent six sections, namely *Galeopetalum* (J.J. Sm.) Sleumer, *Cyanophthalmos* Sleumer, *Vitis-idaea* (Moench) W.D.J. Koch, *Bracteata* Nakai, *Epigynium* (Klotzsch) Hook. f. and *Eococcus* Sleumer. Airy Shaw (1948) included a seventh section, *Aethopus* Airy Shaw. The new species described below clearly falls in the section *Epigynium* (Klotzsch) Hook. f., mainly on account of the lenticillate stem and branches beset with lanceolate scales up to 5 mm long, lanceolate to oblong-lanceolate glabrous leaves, perulate racemes and spurless anthers.

As a result of revisionary work on the Family Ericaceae in India under 'Flora of India Project', several field trips to the eastern Himalaya and north-eastern India and herbarium visits to several Indian herbaria were made. During a herbarium visit to Arunachal Field Station (ARUN) under the Botanical Survey of India, Itanagar, Arunachal Pradesh (December 2002), an interesting specimen of a species of *Vaccinium* L. was consulted. A critical study of this specimen revealed that it is new to science and is described and illustrated here.

Vaccinium myodianum Panda & Sanjappa, sp. nov.

Fig. 1

Species nova *Vaccinium venosum* Wight valde affinis, sed foliis lanceolatis vel oblong-lanceolatis, rhachidibus 25-35 mm longis, bracteis majoribus (c. 6 x 3 mm), lobis calycis acuminatis et antherae thecis glabris differt, et a

V. subdissitifolium P.F. Stevens differt ramulis glabris, foliis lanceolatis vel oblong-lanceolatis, basi anguste cuneatis, non rotundatis, lobis calycis acuminatis, corollis intus densissime pilosis et antherae thecis glabris.

Typus: INDIA: Arunachal Pradesh, Dibang Valley district, 10 km from Tewarygram, near Myodia, 2.ii.1988, S.K. Das 2985 (holotype: ARUN!).

Stout, erect shrub to treelet, up to 9 m high. Stem terete, profusely branched, lenticillate, glabrous, often covered with lanceolate scales up to 5 mm long; branches and twigs terete, glabrous. Leaves alternate, chartaceo-coriaceous, lamina lanceolate to oblong-lanceolate, 70-120 x 12-23 mm, serrate at margin, narrowly cuneate at base, acuminate at apex, glabrous; venation brochidodromous with 8-10 pairs lateral nerves, obscure above, conspicuous beneath; petioles 1-2 mm long, glabrous. Racemes axillary or pseudoterminal, perulate; rachis 25-35 mm long, 20-24-flowered, glabrous. Flowers 7-9 mm long; pedicels 3-4 mm long, glabrous; bract 1, basal, broadly ovate, c. 6 x 3 mm, ciliate at margin, shortly acuminate at apex, glabrous; bracteoles 2, opposite, basal, ovate-elliptic, c. 2 x 1 mm, ciliate at margin toward upper half, long acuminate at apex, glabrous. Calyx lobes broadly ovate, c. 1 x 0.5 mm, entire at margin, acuminate at apex, glabrous. Corolla urceolate, c. 4 x 2 mm, glabrous outside, densely pilose inside, lobes ovate, minute. Stamens 10, c. 4 mm long; filaments c. 1 mm long, slender, glabrous, dilated at base; anther lobes c. 1 mm long, glabrous except spinuous margin, each lobe with c. 2 mm long single tubule. Pistil c. 6.5 mm long; ovary subglobose, c. 2 x 1.5 mm, glabrous, ovules 6-8 on axile placenta in each locule; disc obscure; style c. 4.5 mm long, slender, glabrous. Fruits not seen.

Distribution: INDIA: eastern Himalaya (Arunachal Pradesh).

Flowering: February.

Etymology: This species is named after its type locality.

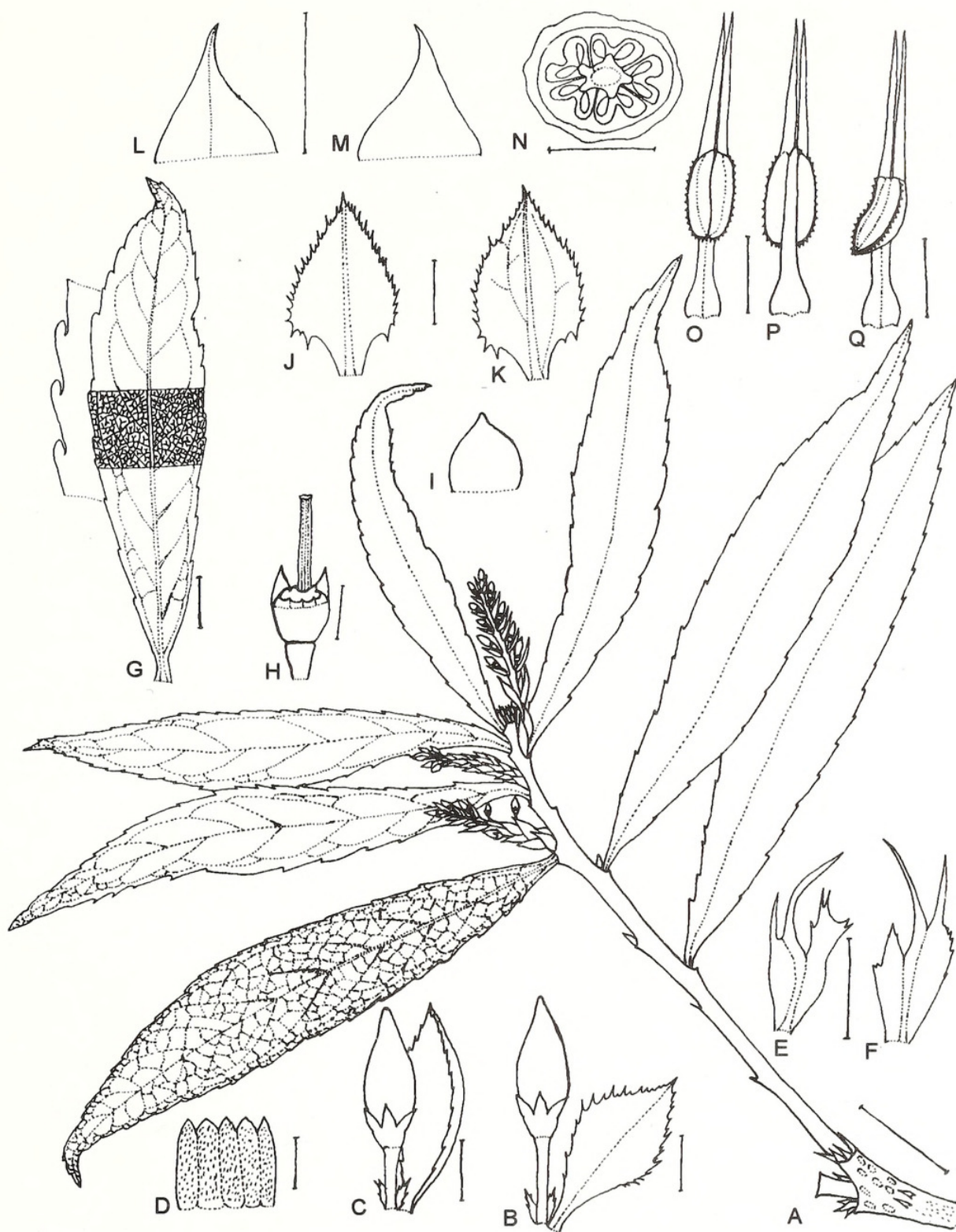


Fig. 1: *Vaccinium myodianum* Panda & Sanjappa, sp. nov.

A. Habit; B - C. Flower buds; D. Corolla split open; E - F. Bracteoles; G. Abaxial leaf; H. Pistil;
I. Corolla lobe; J - K. Bracts; L - M. Calyx lobes; N. Ovary (t.s.); O - Q. Stamens.

Scale bars: A = 2 cm; B - D, H = 2 mm; E - F, J - Q = 1 mm; G = 1 cm (A - Q: drawn from S.K. Das 2985)

DISCUSSION

Vaccinium myodianum is closely related to *V. venosum* Wight, a Sino-Himalayan species, from which it differs in having lanceolate or oblong-lanceolate leaf blades, short

racemes (25-35 mm long), larger bract (c. 6 x 3 mm), acuminate calyx lobes and glabrous anther lobes. By contrast, *V. venosum* showed elliptic-oblong leaf blades, comparatively longer racemes (65-75 mm long), smaller bract (c. 2 x 1 mm), acute calyx lobes and granular anther lobes. *V. myodianum*

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is also allied to another Sino-Himalayan species, *V. subdissitifolium* P.F. Stevens, but differs from it in having glabrous branches, lanceolate or oblong-lanceolate leaf blades, narrowly cuneate leaf-base, acuminate calyx lobes, densely pilose corolla inside and glabrous anthers. By contrast, *V. subdissitifolium* showed usually densely setose branches, oblong, obovate to ovate leaf blades, broadly to

narrowly rounded leaf-base, acute calyx lobes, glabrous corolla and granular anthers.

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