

A New Species of Birthwort Found in South China

Aristolochia (Aristolochiaceae) is a family with about 550 species of lianas, shrubs, or tuberous herbs with peculiar zygomorphic flowers that are presumably adapted to fly pollination. During a recent botanical expedition in Tongbiguan Provincial Nature Reserve in southwestern Yunnan Province, researchers from the Xishuangbanna Tropical Botanical Garden (XTBG), Chinese Academy of Sciences collected an unknown species of *Aristolochia*.

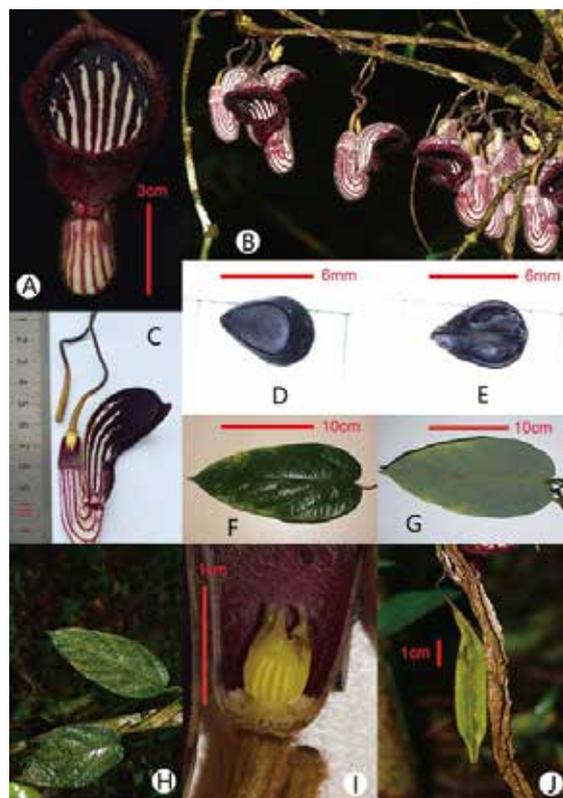
It is similar to *A. tonkinensis*, *A. faviogonzalezii*, *A. balansae*, *A. saccata*, and *A. cathcartii*, but the flower limb is nearly rectangular and covered with purple warts as well as long papillae and the throat is yellowish-white with dark purple lines and dots.

After consulting national Floras and other relevant literature as well as numerous herbarium specimens, the researchers confirmed that it is a new species. It was named as *Aristolochia tongbiguanensis*.

This new species is different mainly by the shape and color of its calyx. The perianth of *A. tongbiguanensis* is yellowish-white with dark purple lines, the limb is nearly rectangular and covered with purple warts as well as long papillae and the throat is yellowish-white with dark purple lines and dots.

Aristolochia tongbiguanensis flowers in September. It is currently known only from the type locality and found growing in dense forests at about 1500 m high elevation.

According to the criteria of the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN), the new species should be assessed as critically



Aristolochia tongbiguanensis.

endangered (CR) because there were only nine mature individuals recorded. Since the researchers did not conduct survey in areas in Myanmar, they prefer to assess it as Endangered (EN) for now.