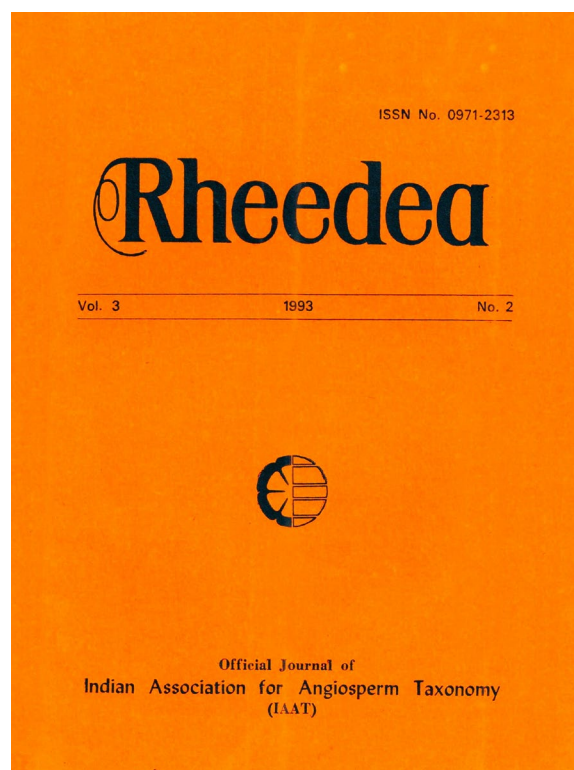




On the status of *Proteroceras* Joseph and Vajravelu (Orchidaceae)

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SHORT COMMUNICATION

**On the status of *Proteroceras* Joseph and Vajravelu
(Orchidaceae)****Abstract**

Proteroceras holttumii Joseph & Vajravelu (Orchidaceae), described from Vellingiri Hills, Tamil Nadu, is reduced to a synonym of *Pteroceras leopardinum* (Par. & Reichb. f.) Seidenf. & Smitin., known earlier from Burma, Thailand, Vietnam, Philippines and Borneo.

Joseph & Vajravelu (J. Indian Bot. Soc. 53: 189–193. 1974) proposed their new genus *Proteroceras* based on a collection by Lakshmanan made on 23rd April 1972 from Vellingiri Hills, Tamil Nadu. They distinguished the genus from *Pteroceras* Hassk. by its much narrower petals, 4 pollinia and details of lip and indicated affinities to *Sarcochilus* R. Br., *Pennilabium* J. J. Sm. and *Thrixspermum* Lour.

While working on the taxonomy of Indian orchids, the present author collected an orchid (CSK 1618, TBGT) from Agastyamala region, Trivandrum District, Kerala. A critical study showed that it matched with *Pteroceras leopardinum* (Par. & Reichb. f.) Seidenf. & Smitin., so far recorded only from Burma, Thailand, Vietnam, Philippines and Borneo (Pedersen 1993). Surprisingly, further comparisons of this species with the type and authentic materials of *Proteroceras holttumii* along with its analytical sketches and protologue provided by the original authors revealed that they are identical. This calls into question the very basis of the monotypic genus *Proteroceras*, which should, in that case, be reduced to a synonym of *Pteroceras* Hassk. Mr. Pedersen (AAU) who has just finished a revisionary study of the genus *Pteroceras* has supported this view (pers. comm.).

Consequently, the genus, *Proteroceras* is reduced into a synonym of *Pteroceras* Hassk. and the only species of the former, *P. holttumii* into a synonym of *P. leopardinum*.

Pteroceras Hassk., Flora Jena 25 (II) Beibl.: 6. 1842; Holttum in Kew Bull. 14: 263–276. 1960; Seidenfaden & Smitinand, Orch. Thailand IV: 531. 1963; Type: *Pteroceras radicans* Hassk.

- Dendrocolla* Bl. sect. *Tubera* Bl., Bijdr. 238. 1825 *p. p.*
- Aerides* Lour. sect. *Tubera* (Bl.) Lindl., Gen. Sp. Or. Pl. 238. 1833, *p. p.*
- Ornitharium* Lindl. & Paxt., Paxt. Fl. Gard. I: 188. 1851.
- Sarcochilus* sensu Reichb. f. in Walp., Ann. Bot. syst. VI: 497. 1863, *p. p.* non R. Br.
- Thrixspermum* sensu Reichb. f., Xenia Orchid. 2: 120. 1865, *p. p.* non Lour.
- Sarcochilus* sensu Benth., Fl. Austral. 6: 291. 1873, *p. p.* non R. Br.
- Sarcochilus* R. Br. sect. *Tubera* Benth. in Benth. & Hook. f., Gen. pl. 3: 575. 1833, *p. p.*, *nom. illeg.*
- Sarcochilus* R. Br. sect. *Pteroceras* (Hassk.) Hook. f., Fl. Brit. India 6: 33. 1890, *p. p.*
- Sarcochilus* sensu Ridley, J. Linn. Soc. 32: 347—348 & 373, 1896, *p. p.* non R. Br.
- Sarcochilus* R. Br. sect. *Eusarcochilus* Schltr., Beih. Repert. Spec. nov. Regni veg. 1: 964. 1913, *p. p.* *nom. illeg.*
- Proteroceras* Joseph & Vajravelu, J. Indian Bot. Soc. 53: 189, 1974, *syn. nov.*
Type: *proteroceras holttumii* Joseph & Vajravelu.
- Thrixspermum leopardinum* was originally described by Parish & Reichb. f. (1874) based on a collection by Parish from Burma. Seidenfaden & Smitinand (1963) transferred it to *Pteroceras*.
- Pteroceras leopardinum*** (Par. & Reichb. f.) Seidenf. & Smitin., Orch. Thailand 4 (1): 535. fig. 395., 1963; Seidenf., Bull. Mus. nat. Paris 3, I, Bot. 5: 97. 1973, Contrib. rev. Orch. flo. Cambo. Laos & Viet. 1: 97. 1975; & Opera Bot. 95: 256. 1988; Pedersen, Opera Bot. 117: 40. 1993.
- Thrixspermum leopardinum* Par. & Reichb. f., Trans. Linn. Soc. 30: 145. 1874.
Type: Burma, Tenasserim Parish 269 (K).
- Sarcochilus leopardinus* (Par. & Reichb. f.) Hook. f., Fl. Brit. India 6: 38. 1890.
- Proteroceras holttumii* Joseph & Vajravelu, J. Indian Bot. Soc. 53: 189, figs. 1—6. 1974, *syn. nov.* Type: Tamil Nadu, Coimbatore Dist. Vellingiri Hills, eastern slopes Lakshmanan 40808 (A-holotype CAL, B-H, isotypes MH).

Dwarf epiphytes with brownish yellow, deeply spurred flowers having reddish brown spots. Base of sidelobe is characterized by a small protuberance and ovary is strongly keeled.

C. Sathish Kumar

Flowering & Fruiting: April-June

Altitudinal Range: 1000-1700 m.

Specimens examined: Kerala, Trivandrum Dist., Agasthyamala CSK 1618 (TBGT); Tamil Nadu, Coimbatore Dist., Vellingiri top *N. P. Balakrishnan* 10364 (MH); Vellingiri 7th Hill *R. Gopalan & R. Chandrasekaran* 41499 (MH); Vellingiri Hills *V. Lakshmanan* 40808 (A, holotype CAL, B-H, isotypes MH).

Distribution: From South West India to Burma, Thailand, Vietnam, Philippines and Borneo.

Notes: The only difference of South Indian plants from Thai plants is the absence of hairs inside spur.

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